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THE
CATHOLIC
CONTROVERSY,

MAINTAINED IN THE PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS OF BOSTON, NEW
SALEM, AND OTHER TOWNS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AGAINST THE

CALUMNIOUS OBJECTIONS AND FALSE IMPUTATIONS OF THE

REV. GEORGE LESSLIE,
PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN WARRINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE:

J. GARDNER, Esq. BARRISTER,

AND OTHER WRITERS, ...

UNDER THE FICTITIOUS APPELLATIONS OF
A SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH, SIMPLEX, &c. &c.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A full refutation of the Charges adduced against Catholicity
By Mr. BELKNAP, in his History of New-Hampshire,

WITH AN

ANSWER to Dr. LATHROP's Lectures on the ERRORS of POPERY.

AND

A Letter from Mons. ALLEGRE, Son of a French Protestant Clergyman, to the AUTHOR with an account of his Conversion, . .
[Translated by a Scotch Lady, a Convert to the Catholic Communion.]

ALSO,

A Letter from a young Gentleman in France to his Friends in America, respecting his conversion, collected by an Irish Gentleman, who lately abjured the Errors of Protestantism.]

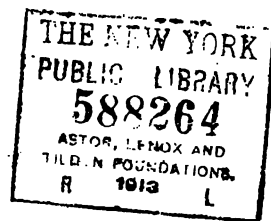
AND A

Specimen of Bostonian Toleration at a Catholic Convert's interment.

BY THE REV. JOHN THAYER,

Formerly a Puritan Minister, of Boston, and afterwards converted
to the Holy Catholic Religion, at Rome, in 1783.

PRINTED BY R. COYNE, CAPEL-STREET, DUBLIN.
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P R E F A C E.

THE occasion of the following Controversy with the Rev. Mr. LESSLIE, was an advertisement which I published a few months after my return to my native town, in these words :

Mr. THAYER, Catholic Priest, of Boston, fully persuaded that he has found the inestimable treasure of the Gospel, is greatly desirous of imparting it to his dear countrymen. For this purpose, he offers to preach on the evenings of the week days, in any of the neighbouring towns. If any persons desire to hear the exposition of the Catholic Faith (of which the majority of Americans have so mistaken an idea) and will furnish any place for the accommodation of the hearers, Mr. THAYER will be ever ready to attend them. He will also undertake to answer the objections any gentleman would wish to make, either publicly or privately, to the doctrine he preaches ; and promises that if any one can convince him he is in error, he will make as public and solemn a recantation of his present belief as he has done of the Protestant religion in which he was educated—Freely he has received—freely he gives.

Nov. 24, 1790.

Mr. LESSLIE came forward thus : “ As the gauntlet is thrown by Mr. Thayer, it is taken up by George Lesslie.” My reply to this was thus couched :

Mr. Printer,

I have observed among several Protestants an air of triumph at Mr. LESSLIE's advertisement. In mine of the 24th of November, I only offered to preach in the towns bordering on Boston, and to answer every objection that might be made to the doctrine I deliver ; yet, as Mr. LESSLIE takes what I then wrote for the “ gauntlet thrown,” I now invite him or any other Minister to appoint me a time and place in Boston, or any of the neighbouring towns, for the combat proposed : I will punctually attend, and I engage to answer every objection against the discriminating points of Catholic Faith, and, if convinced of error, to publicly and solemnly abjure it. Let it be observed, that I do not undertake to defend all those articles which our adversaries, out of their abundant liberality, and for reasons best known to themselves, have added to our Creed, as, the *Pope's infallibility, adoration of the saints, of their images* and

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P R E F A C E.

and relics, breach of faith with heretics, &c. I stand forth in defence of the genuine Popery which is taught in all the councils, catechisms and schools of the Universal Church. I not only offer this public disputation, but I even conjure the Ministers, if they have real love for souls, to accept it, that the eyes of the people who are kept in darkness may be opened to the light. I also desire them to come armed with all the arguments which Tillotson, and other champions of Protestancy, have ever used in its behalf.

In expectation of some opponent, I shall open a controversial Lecture, at the Catholic Church, to begin from to-morrow evening, at half past six o'clock. All who love the truth, and sincerely desire salvation, are requested to attend, and they will hear those great and important things which have been hitherto carefully concealed from them. It is no vain presumption in my own learning or abilities that prompts me to this step; my only motive is the glory of God in the salvation of poor souls—My entire trust is in the strength of my Redeemer, and the goodness of my cause. Perhaps Mr. Lesslie's desire is to dispute in the public papers; if this be the design of his challenge, I will begin as soon as any Printer will consent to give our controversies a place. I am prepared for every honest measure that will tend to enlarge the empire of truth and religion.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary, of Boston.

Boston, Jan. 26, 1791.

In consequence, a printer sent me a polite note, by which he offered me a place in his Gazette. I accepted his invitation, and soon sent him my first paper.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

Boston, Oct. 5, 1793.

By way of preface to the controversy which I am opening, and to avoid all misrepresentations of our doctrines, I here offer to the public an abridgment of the Catholic faith. To escape the stigma of plagiarism, I now declare that I have no pretensions to originality, and that whenever I find my idea well expressed by another, I shall use his words, without the formality of a quotation.* The following are the capital articles of our religion, viz.

F I R S T.

WE believe in one only true and living GOD, the Lord and Creator of all things, subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. To this God alone we give divine honour and adoration ; and we detest, with our whole souls, all kinds of idolatry ; that is, all such wickedness by which divine worship is given to any false god, or idol, or any person or thing whatever, beside the one true and living God. We honor indeed the BLESSED VIRGIN, the mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, but not as a goddess, nor with any part of divine worship. We honor the angels and saints of God, as his servants. We honor his priests, his churches, his altars, his word, and whatever else has relation to him ; but all for his sake, and by a subordinate honor that is referred to him—such also is the veneration which we have for the cross, for relics, and for the pictures of our Redeemer, and of his saints : We value them as memorials of Christ and his holy ones ; as representations of our Redeemer or of our redemption ; as helps to pious thoughts and affections ; but we condemn and anathematize all such as would pray to them, or believe any divinity or power inherent in them, or give them divine worship—[*See the second Council of Nice, Act 7, and the Council of Trent, Sess. 25.*]

2DLY. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God ; who for us sinners, and for our salvation, was made man ; that he might be the Head, the High Priest, the Advocate and Saviour of *all* mankind. We acknowledge him our *only* Redeemer, who paid our ransom by dying for us on the cross ; that his death is the fountain of all our good ; and that mercy, grace and salvation can by no means be obtained but through him—We confess

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* It is presumed that the above declaration will sufficiently apologize for all I have borrowed from the controversial writers of our communion.

him to be the mediator of God and man, the only *Mediator of Redemption*, and also the only *Mediator of Intercession*, who stands in need of no other's merits to recommend his petitions—As to the saints and angels, we address ourselves, indeed, to them, to desire their prayers, as we and all other Christians do to God's servants here on earth; but we only beg them to pray for us and with us, to our common Lord, who is our God and their God, through the merits of the same Jesus Christ, who is our Mediator and their Mediator—[*See the Council of Trent, Sess. 25.*]

3DLY. We believe the Scriptures of the old and new Testament to be the word of God; and we have the highest veneration for their authority, and would rather die than disbelieve or doubt of one iota or tittle of them. If at any time, or in any place, the church has restrained the ignorant from reading them, it was not out of disrespect to the sacred book, much less out of a sacrilegious design to keep the people in darkness, but purely because the unlearned (as the scriptures themselves inform us, 2 Pet. iii. 16) are apt to wrest them to their own destruction: And if we also receive unwritten traditions as part of the word of God, we mean no other traditions but such as are *divine*, and which we know to be divine by the same means by which we know the scriptures to be so, viz. by the testimony of the Catholic Church, to which Christ gave, in the persons of the apostles, a promise of a perpetual and infallible guidance in matters of faith.

4THLY. We believe that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one, viz. baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order, and matrimony.

5THLY. We believe that in the mass there is offered to God, a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there is truly, really and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body; and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion we call *transubstantiation*: We also hold that under either kind alone, Jesus Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament. In this sacrament and sacrifice we adore not the bread and wine (which would indeed be a most stupid idolatry,) but Jesus Christ, the Son of God; whom, upon the strongest grounds of the word of God, and upon the authority of his Church, we believe to be really present in the sacred mysteries—and it is to his passion and death, which we there celebrate and offer to God, that we attribute all that propitiation and grace which we expect from the holy mass.

6THLY. We believe that, in order to enter into life, we must keep the commandments of God, and that whoever dies in the guilt of a wilful breach of any one of these divine precepts, will be eternally lost ; that no power on earth can give any man leave to break any commandment of God, or to commit any sin whatever, or to do evil that good may come of it ; that neither the Pope, nor any man living, can dispense with the law of God, or make it lawful for any one to lie, to forswear himself, or to do any thing that is forbidden in the divine law.

7THLY. We indeed hold that God has given to his priests a commission to remit sins : but we believe that neither priest, bishop nor Pope, nor any power in heaven or earth, can forgive sinners, without their hearty repentance, and a serious purpose of amendment.—The indulgencies granted in our church are neither a permission to commit sin, nor pardon for sins to come ; but are only a release of the temporal punishment due to sins which are already pardoned ; no indulgence availing any thing towards this release, until by hearty repentance, the guilt be renounced.

8THLY. Our faith teaches us to detest all massacres, treasons and murders whatever, whether committed by Protestants against Catholics, or by Catholics against Protestants. We regard them as the worst of crimes that can be committed betwixt man and man, and such as cannot be justified by any pretext of religion—and so far are Catholics from thinking it no sin to murder heretics (which is so falsely and unjustly imputed to them) that in all kingdoms and states, which profess the Catholic religion, any such murderer of heretics must expect nothing but death, by the laws of the country, and, if he dies impenitent, eternal damnation, according to the doctrine of his church.

9THLY. We believe that there is a middle state called PURGATORY, where those who have not fully satisfied divine justice in this life, must be purified, before they can enter heaven, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the prayers, fasts and alms-deeds of the faithful.

10THLY. In fine, we believe that no man can be justified, either by the works of the law of nature, or of the law of Moses, without faith in Jesus Christ—that we cannot, by any preceding works, merit the grace of justification ; that all the merit of our good works is the gift of God ; and that every merit and satisfaction of ours depends entirely on the merits and passion of Christ—*[See the Council of Trent, Sess. 6.]*

These are our real principles, taught by our Church in her councils, and learned by her children in their very catechisms.—These true Catholic principles we are ready not only to sign with our hands, but if called to it and assisted by divine grace, to seal also with our blood. We renounce, detest, and anathematize all
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contrary doctrines imputed to us by the father of lies, or by any of his agents, who are, and always have been, busy in misrepresenting and slandering the church of God—But what wonder? Christ our Lord, his apostles and the primitive Christians were thus treated; and he has foretold (Mat. ix.) that his disciples should be treated in the same manner—The tenets, which are here briefly exposed, I am ready to defend against Mr. Lesslie or any other Protestant, whether he produces his real name or not, provided he be fair and candid in his statement of facts and points of faith. God the great scrutinizer of all hearts, shall be the judge of the purity of my intentions; let every reader judge of the weight of the arguments which I shall urge.

I shall take no notice of any one who shall mingle scurrility or personal reflections with his reasonings.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

*Unus apex verbi ratione valentior omni,
Milleque decretis, conciliisque prior.*

MR. THAYER having exhibited a summary of the articles of his creed, and engaged to answer every objection against the *discriminating* points of, what he calls, Catholic faith, I shall proceed to offer some objections; expecting such answers as are consistent with that regard to truth and religion he professes. The properest method, in my humble opinion, is to take some one point, and go through with that, before we proceed to another. This will be the most likely way to avoid confusion, and to come at that truth we both profess to aim at. No arguments will be locked upon and treated as worthy of notice, but such as are evidently drawn from, and grounded upon, the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Mr. Thayer will therefore save himself the trouble of bringing into view any which have no other support than the authority of his church: for, until that is undeniably established, to draw any arguments from it would be only begging the point in question. That INFALLIBILITY which is claimed by the Romish Church, being the main pillar of its support, it may not be amiss to begin with it; for if the claim appears to be founded in truth, all disputes with her other points will be superseded; we have then nothing to do, to receive her infallible dictates as the rule of our faith and practice. The objections I have to offer to this doctrine are as follow:—In the first place, it does not appear to have any foundation in the word of God. Our Popish adversaries, I am very sensible, pressed a number of texts of scripture into their service, in sup-

of the pretended infallibility of their church. To take up and canvass each of these distinctly, in order to shew how little they avail to their purpose, would take too much room for this paper. I shall therefore wave the consideration of them, until Mr. Thayer calls my attention to them, by offering them in vindication of the point in question. But then, secondly, supposing, but not granting, Christ to have promised this high and singular privilege to his church; I would fain know how the Church of Rome came by the monopoly of it, to the exclusion of all other Christian churches from any share in it? Mr. Thayer, I presume, will not have the confidence to say it is because there is no other Christian church on earth. Should he offer this as a reason, his assertion will not be taken as any proof, unless he can first make it appear that a sufficient quantity of this supposed infallibility is vested in himself. A third objection is, the doctors of the Romish Church have never yet settled the point, as to where, or in whom, this infallibility is lodged: So that, if we had occasion to apply to it in any case, we should be utterly at a loss where to find it. Roman Catholic writers, as far as I can learn, are all agreed that it is somewhere in their church: But then they are not all agreed as to the particular subject of it; some of them holding it to be in the Pope; others, in a general council; others, again, in such a council, in conjunction with the Pope. Strange, if this infallibility be really in their church, and is a matter of such importance as they pretend, that it has laid so long dormant, and never yet effectually exerted itself to settle a point on which its supposed usefulness does so entirely depend! Until this matter is fully determined, we may rationally and safely conclude, they themselves do not know where it is; nor is it, in my humble opinion, of any importance they ever should. For, fourthly, we have, in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, a complete, a perfect rule both of faith and practice. It is granted, there are in them some things hard to be understood, which ignorant and depraved minds may pervert and abuse—What then? Will it thence follow, that a right knowledge of them is unattainable by gracious, humble and diligent inquirers after divine truth? By no means. As to all points which essentially concern salvation, the scriptures are clear and intelligible, level to the understanding of children. Timothy, from a child, knew the holy scriptures.

What need is there, then, of this supposed infallibility, when we have in these inspired writings a sure word of prophecy, which even children of tolerable capacity may, by the grace of God, so understand as to become wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus?

And further; by their assistance, without the help either of Pope or council, the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 1 Tim. iii. 15 to 17.

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Upon the whole, until the church of Rome can make out her claim to infallibility, by clear and evident scripture proof; until it can, by the same evidence, be made to appear, that she alone is invested with this high privilege, to the utter exclusion of all Christians who are not of her communion; until the subject of this infallibility is clearly and convincingly fixed and determined; and until the necessity and usefulness of it in the Christian church is clearly evinced; in a word, until each of these points is clearly proved by the word of God, and beyond all reasonable doubt—we may safely look upon and treat this pretended infallibility as a cunningly-devised fable, a mere delusion, invented and imposed on the people of that communion, not to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but the bellies of the teachers, and spiritual guides of that church.

GEORGE LESSLIE.

IT gives me real pleasure, that the Rev. Mr. Lesslie has adopted the plan of taking up one point of controversy at a time, and of going through with that, before we proceed to another.—I entirely agree with him that, until the *infallible authority* of the church be undeniably established, all arguments drawn from that authority, will be begging the point in dispute.—Nothing can be more pertinent and consonant to right reason, than his observation, “That, if the claim of our church to infallibility be founded in truth, all disputes with her on other points are at once superseded, we having nothing to do but receive her infallible dictates as the rule of our faith and practice.” I once flattered myself with possessing a considerable share in the esteem and affection of Mr. Lesslie, for whom I still retain the same regard. I hope that I shall manage the controversy with so much calmness and moderation, as never to forfeit that place in his heart which I am greatly desirous of retaining. The glory of God in the salvation of souls is my only aim. Mr. Lesslie attempts to overturn the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the church by four objections, which he proposes with great confidence, and on which he seems to lay great stress.—In his fourth objection, he takes for granted, what all Catholics deny, viz. “That the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a complete and perfect rule of faith.” On the contrary, the doctrine of our church is, that the word of God is the complete and perfect rule of our faith; which word we contend is not wholly contained in the scriptures, but is in part transmitted to us in the tradition of the church. But this very important question shall be treated in some future paper, where I shall shew that, even if we grant the scriptures to be our perfect rule of faith
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and practice, the Protestant Bible, maimed and corrupted as it is, can never be this rule. Mr. Lesslie's third objection has been long ago proposed and defended by Dr. Tillotson with a great deal of wit. It is, "That Catholics know not where to find that infallibility which they all assert to exist among them." This objection appears to me to be without the least solidity, because all Catholics on the globe are fully agreed, that the infallibility, which we attribute to our church, resides in the majority of the Bishops (the successors of the Apostles) united with their visible head the Pope, whether they be assembled in council or not. This is so essential an article of our faith, that whoever denies it, is regarded as a heretic. There is not the least shadow of contradiction among us on this head. Some divines indeed carry their respect for the sovereign Pontiff so far as to suppose, that Christ will never suffer him to propose any thing to the church as of faith, which is contrary to divine revelation, or in other words that he is infallible. But this is only an opinion, which every one is free to believe or reject, according as the arguments for or against it strike his mind.—The difference we make between points of faith and of mere opinion is, that the first must be believed under pain of our being regarded as heretics, while the latter may be rejected at pleasure.—We may here observe, that whoever maintains the Pope's infallibility must, *a fortiori*, admit infallibility in the union of the Pope and majority of the Bishops, it being absurd to ascribe this privilege to a part, and to refuse it to a large body including that very part.

In order to answer Mr. Lesslie's two other objections in the clearest manner, I shall shew, in the first place, that the infallibility of Christ's church is founded on the plain word of God, and secondly, that the church in communion with the See of Rome has (to use Mr. L's. expression) the monopoly of this high and singular privilege. The infallibility of Christ's church is the most important question that can be examined by the sincere lovers of truth and peace of all parties; for if there be an infallible church, the lovers of truth will think it the greatest happiness to be under the direction of a guide, by whom they cannot be misled; and the lovers of peace will heartily rejoice to see innumerable disputes, which rather serve to perplex the truth than to clear it, cut off by the determination of this one single point.—That the vast importance of the question now under consideration may more evidently appear, I will here set down a few of the momentous consequences which follow from the infallibility of Christ's church, if it be proved to be real. It follows. 1st, That they, who are members of any church which disowns this infallibility, are not of Christ's church. A terrible consequence! and deserves to be seriously pondered by all those who are not wholly
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indifferent whether their faith be right or wrong. 2. That the same arguments which prove the infallibility of the church, prove also all the articles which she declares necessary to be believed, though there be no express scriptural texts to establish them, for an infallible church cannot propose erroneous tenets to her children. 3. That there is no salvation out of this church, for this is a part of her doctrine grounded on the words of Christ, "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me:" This merits the most serious reflections, since they who despise God are not in the way of salvation. 4. If Christ's church be proved infallible even to the world's end, it follows that she never fell into any error against faith, and that, as she was once the true church, she always has been so, and must continue so for ever.—This consequence overthrows the whole reformation at one blow, because that reformation never had any other pretence or plausible colour, than the supposed errors of the church of Rome. I do not see how this fourth inference can be evaded, but by pretending (contrary to the manifest tenor of the Gospel) that Christ's church is sometimes invisible, or that at the reformation and many ages before it, there existed a visible church which was not united to that of Rome, and yet was the true church of Christ. If Christ established an infallible church on earth, it follows, 5. That she alone is the interpreter of God's word, the only judge of controversy, and the supreme tribunal from which there is no appeal, either to private judgment or to any authority. Though all Protestants, from Luther down to those of our day, reject in theory, any supreme judge of faith, yet, in practice (such is the evidence of the last consequence) they have given this infallibility to their synods—This could be demonstrated from the proceedings of the grand Synod of Dort, held against the Arminians, in 1618. But this would lead me too far. The few consequences which I have hinted suffice to shew how nearly the point now in debate concerns our salvation.

I now proceed to the scriptural proof of this article of our faith. The truths which are of the greatest importance to man, and which therefore God has most at heart to inculcate, are commonly, I believe, if not always, expressed in so clear a manner, that they cannot be misunderstood by the well disposed—I will venture to assert, that the *infallibility* of Christ's church is one of those truths which are clearly and obviously contained in the sacred writings. The promises of Christ on this head are so intelligible as to prevent all but wilful mistake;—the solemnity also of the circumstances, in which Christ made those sacred engagements to his church, is so remarkable, that it cannot but imprint an idea of some extraordinary favour bestowed upon her.—His first promise of protecting his church against all the powers of darkness,

was addressed to St. Peter (*Matt. xvi.*) in reward of that noble profession of his divinity "which neither flesh nor blood, but the heavenly Father, had revealed to him."—The other promises were made at the last supper, when all his words seemed to be the overflowings of a heart filled with concern for his future church. Then Christ unbosomed himself to his Apostles as a friend or father; comforting them in their affliction for his approaching departure, and, as a pledge of his unalterable love to his church, bequeathed to them his spirit of truth to be our guide and teacher to the end of time; all which he ratified again a few moments before his ascension into heaven, when he gave the Apostles their commission to teach and baptize all nations, and encouraged them to undertake it, with a promise of his almighty and perpetual assistance (*Matt. xxviii.*)—Let us first consider our Saviour's address to St. Peter (*Matt. xvi.*)—this passage contains an absolute promise, no condition being expressed or even hinted in it.—The occasion of this promise is also very remarkable, as I have already observed. St. Peter's name until then was *Simon*; but God having pre-ordained him to be the chief pillar of his church, gave him a distinct faith of the divinity of Christ, of which he made this solemn profession, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Upon which our Saviour dignified him with a title, suitable both to the firmness of his faith, and the eminent station he was to hold, calling him *Cephas* or *Peter*; both which words signify a *rock*; and then, as a further mark of distinction, he addresses to him the promise: "Thou art Peter (i. e. a rock) and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words evidently include a promise, and a promise to the church. But what is the favour which they contain? First, Christ declares that his church should be *built on a rock*. Would he, who foresaw every event, have said that his church should be *built on a rock*, if he had foreseen its future fall? Did he not design that this rock should be a firm and lasting foundation? Or did he act by chance, and without any end in view? But Christ himself has answered these questions in the following words:—"The wise man built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." (*Matt. vii. 24.*) Whence it is plain that Christ, by promising that his church should be built upon a rock, intended to assure us that its foundation should be so strong, so deeply laid, that it should stand in spite of all storms, oppositions or efforts whatever. And therefore, to prevent the very possibility of all but wilful mistakes, he explains himself by positively asserting, "That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words imply a prediction of the attempts that would be made by the enemies of the church to

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corrupt her doctrine, and a positive assurance that all their strength, malice and stratagems (which Christ calls "the gates of hell") should be entirely ineffectual. The prediction has been fully verified by the many cruel attacks which have been made upon the church ever since its infancy, either by Jews, Gentiles, Mahometans, Heretics, &c. Is not Christ as infallible when he promises blessings, as when he foretells calamities and disasters? Without doubt—and therefore, though the powers of darkness will never cease to make war upon the church, their efforts will always be as vain as the wind and rain against a house that is built upon a rock, and her faith will remain immovable and incorruptible to the end of ages. For if words retain their usual signification, we cannot charge the church of Christ with error, in one single article, without drawing this impious consequence, that he was either ignorant of the event or unfaithful to his promises, and that, after having solemnly engaged his word "that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church," he has delivered her up to Satan to be destroyed by him. This consequence will appear undeniable to those who reflect that faith is essential to the church, and that heresy destroys faith; whence it follows that if the whole church falls into heresy, she is without faith, and is no more the church she was before, than a man can continue to be a man, when his soul is departed. The church of Christ can only be that society, which believes wholly and entirely the doctrine which was taught by Christ, and delivered to her by the Apostles. If, therefore, she has renounced any part of that doctrine, she has turned apostate—she has ceased, from that moment, to be the chaste spouse of Christ—the gates of hell have prevailed against her; and, consequently, our Saviour, in permitting that to happen which he promised should not happen, has been unfaithful to his word. Again, Christ either foresaw that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church, or he foresaw it not. If he did not foresee it, then he promised he knew not what, which is blasphemy: But, if he did foresee it, then (as his foresight was infallible in every thing) the event must infallibly take place; and so it must be infallibly true, that the gates of hell never have prevailed nor never will prevail against his church. In a word—the gates of hell, according to Christ, will never prevail against his church; but if she fall into any error against faith, the gates of hell prevail against her; therefore, she is infallible in all matters of faith. This, to me, appears demonstration.—But I shall be asked, whether all men are not fallible, and whether all their united wit, learning or industry can preserve them from errors? I answer that, if Christ had made the infallibility of his church to depend on this feeble support, he would, like the foolish man, have built his edifice on the sand. Thanks to God, his church does not lean on so feeble a basis. He has secured to her the perpetual

petual assistance and direction of the Holy Ghost, who cannot err. This stands plainly recorded in the holy Gospel. Our Redeemer, addressing his Apostles, says, (John xiv.) "I will ask my Father, and he will send you another Comforter, to abide with you for ever." He then informs them who this Comforter is to be, and to what end he is to come:—"The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." He afterwards (John xvi.) repeats the same promise:—"I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth." From these promises, joined with that in Matt. xxviii. where Christ declares that he will ever be present with his church, it is evident that the Holy Ghost is the author of the infallibility of Christ's church.

I suppose that most Christians hold, that Christ's church was infallible while guided by the Apostles themselves. But is not infallibility as necessary to the church now, as it was under the apostles? Has she not even more need of the promised Spirit to preserve her from error? What reason is there then to think that Christ should withdraw his Spirit when his assistance is most needed? Or that the engagement of an *unlimited* and *unconditional* promise should become void, at the very time when the *sole* end and motive of it was not only fully existing, but more pressingly called for its fulfilment than at first? Or, must we accuse Christ of inconstancy, and say, that he was less tender of his church in process of time, than when he first espoused her, and sealed the contract with his precious blood? St. Paul so little doubted of Christ's perpetual fidelity to the church, his spouse, that he calls her "the pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15) which would be flatly false, if she could ever uphold error, or bring in corruption, superstition and idolatry. For the same reason Christ himself has declared, that "he who will not hear the church shall be reputed as the heathen and the publican." (Matt. xviii.) And shall a man be esteemed, with the heathens and publicans, as out of the way of salvation, for not hearing a church that can teach false doctrine? It is also for the same reason that Christ has pronounced—"He who believes shall be saved, and he who believes not shall be damned." (Mark xvi.) Believe what? Why, the doctrine of the church which he has established. Would Christ oblige mankind, under pain of eternal damnation, to believe a church which he foresaw would seduce them in process of time? Shall we be damned for not crediting a seducer? This would directly contradict the Saviour's admonition in another text—"Beware of false prophets." (Matt. vii.) For if we are bound to beware of false prophets, and yet the church herself may turn false prophet,
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and mislead us; then we are both commanded to beware of her, and at the same time threatened with eternal damnation if we refuse to believe her. What strange incoherencies do men run into, when they abandon the truth! By this command to beware of false prophets, Christ shows plainly that it was his intention to establish an infallible church on earth; a church that should be to all her children a safe, unerring guide, to preserve them from imposition and falsehood; a church that should be taught and directed by the Spirit of truth even to the end of the world. These are the texts on which we fairly build the infallibility of Christ's church. They are not "prest into our service," but spontaneously offer their aid to establish this fundamental tenet of the Catholic church. Now suppose the contradictories of these texts were found in the Bible: Suppose, for instance, that the Saviour had said to Saint Peter, "I will not build my church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall prevail against it:"—"I will not send the Holy Ghost to abide with you for ever. He shall not teach you all things, nor lead you into all truth." Suppose that St. Paul had positively asserted, that "the church of God is not the pillar and ground of the truth." Would not all men of sound sense have concluded from such texts, that there is no such thing as an infallible church on earth? This would certainly have been the consequence. Now, if texts so contradictory to those which are really found in scripture would force us to conclude against the doctrine of infallibility, surely the texts which I have quoted must oblige us to conclude in favour of that doctrine.—Having now proved, as it appears to me, that Christ has established an infallible church on earth, I shall secondly show that the Roman Catholic church alone is that church.

The FIRST proof which I shall advance in favour of the church in communion with the See of Rome is, that no other society can, with any colour of reason, lay claim to this privilege. This title cannot certainly belong to the schismatic Greeks, who have repeatedly changed their faith on points that are deemed important by all Christians. For the same reason, infallibility cannot be adjudged to any Protestant sect, because their variations have far exceeded those of the Greeks. Besides, all our dissenting brethren frankly renounce all pretensions to this prerogative. Now, as I have proved that infallibility is essential to Christ's church, and that no society, except ours, can claim this high privilege, it must of course be all our own.

If it should now be boldly asserted that the Catholic church has erred as much as any other, we might fairly desire our adversaries to assign some public, notorious fact in proof of this injurious accusation. We might also insist on their showing how such a charge

charge can be urged, without impeaching the veracity or the power of the Redeemer.

SECONDLY. That the church of Rome alone is infallible, appears from her being the only one that can show a perpetual visibility from the Apostles down to the 16th century, when the Protestant religion first made its appearance. Now Christ's church was always visible or invisible before that period. If visible, and if the Roman church was not this true church, then our adversaries are bound to mark out distinctly in what other visible society the church of Christ subsisted for 1500 years before the Reformation. If this could be done, they would be obliged immediately to unite themselves to that external communion of the true church, it never being lawful to live a moment separated from Christ. If it be said that Christ's church was invisible for several ages, it is manifest that none of the reformed churches, at their separation from the Roman church, joined themselves to the true church; for it is inconceivable how men can receive instructions from, or join themselves to, an invisible society. Now all the reformed churches were invisible for many ages, as they themselves all fairly own. The consequence is, that infallibility (which I have proved to be a property of Christ's church) of right belongs exclusively to the Catholic church, which has always been visible in a succession of Bishops and Pastors, teaching one and the same faith from the beginning of Christianity down to this very time.

THIRDLY. That the church in communion with Rome has the only just claim to the promised infallibility, is plain, because that church was the true one when St. Paul wrote his epistle to it.—He stiles the Romans the "*beloved of God*"—"called to be saints."—and thanks God "*that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world.*"—Which he would not have done had they been tainted with any error. As the See of Rome was then free from error, it is clear that the whole Christian church in communion with her was likewise untainted; because the Apostle says, that "*their faith was spoken of (or preached) throughout the whole world.*"—The consequence is, that the true church of Christ was then visible only in that society of Christians which was united in faith with the See of Rome. Hence I argue thus: The church in communion with Rome was once Christ's true church (and almost all Protestants own that she continued so for some ages): therefore, unless it be demonstratively proved that she has since forfeited her right, she must be still acknowledged the same true church to which all the promises of infallibility were made—I say, *demonstratively*, for surely nothing less than clear evidence of guilt can deprive any society of a privilege to which it once had an incontestible right.

FOURTHLY. The infallibility promised by Christ must be lodged either in the church of Rome, or in some other, from which

which she has separated herself ; and then that church, in which it is lodged, and from which the church of Rome has separated herself, must, in all ages, have had a succession of Bishops and Pastors, teaching a doctrine directly opposite to what is now called Popery. But no history informs us of a church, in which there has been a perpetual succession of Bishops and Pastors, teaching a doctrine opposite to that of the church of Rome, and from whose communion that church separated herself ; nay, our greatest enemies confess, that “ *Popery reigned universally and without contradiction for many hundred years.*” Therefore the infallible church established by Christ can be no other than the church of Rome ; which alone can truly show a perpetual succession of Bishops teaching the same doctrine from age to age, and from which all other churches went forth and separated themselves. .

FIFTHLY. The last argument which I shall now use to prove that infallibility is peculiar to the Catholic church, is this :—At the end of the sixth century, when St. Gregory the Pope sent missionaries to convert England, there existed only the vast body of Christians which were united to the See of Rome, and some remains of Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Donatists, Pelagians, &c. who were no part of the true church, having been justly cut off from it for heresy (as Protestants themselves confess.—Now I ask, whether Christ had at that time a church on earth, or not ? If he had not, then the article of the Creed ; *I believe one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,*” must at that period have been untrue, and Christ must have falsified his solemn promise of protecting her against all the attacks of her enemies. If, at that time, Christ had a church, it was the church then in communion with the See of Rome ; and therefore, if the church now in communion with that See be the same in her faith as in Pope Gregory’s time, it follows manifestly that, as she was then, so she is now the only true, and, consequently, infallible church of Christ on earth. In proof that her faith is the same now, as it was then, we have the concurring testimonies of historians, both Catholic and Protestant, who unanimously agree, that St. Augustin brought into England that religion which is now called Popery.—Some Protestants indeed are pleased to say that England was converted from one idolatry to another ; but all own the fact—Besides, it is notorious to all who have read the homilies, that England never changed its faith for nine hundred years, i. e. from its conversion to Christianity under Pope Gregory, until the XXIII. of Henry the VIII. It is therefore demonstrated, that Catholics hold *now* the same faith which was planted by St. Augustin in England, when it was first converted, and consequently, that, as St. Augustin was then a member of the true church of Christ, Catholics must be so at present.

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The arguments which I have now adduced, appear to me abundantly sufficient to convince all, that the infallibility, which Christ has by promise attached to his church, is found *only* in that society which is in communion with the See of Rome. The subject is by no means exhausted; but, that I may not any longer intrude on the patience of the reader. I will now leave him to seriously consider the weight of my proofs.

As a postscript to my defence of the Catholic doctrine of infallibility, I here insert the sentiments of some of the Fathers who lived in the primitive times, when Protestants themselves own that the church was in its purity. Their belief on this subject will corroborate my interpretation of the promises of Christ, and show that it is not invented at pleasure, to serve an occasion.—Those eminent Saints and illustrious Doctors died before any contest had arisen concerning this matter: All real Christians venerate their names, and regard them as authentic witnesses of the faith of the ages in which they flourished. St. Gregory, the Great, speaks of the four first general councils which represented the Catholic church, in these terms:—“ *I do profess to reverence the four first councils, as I do the four books of the Gospel.*” Now, it is to be presumed that this Saint believed the Gospels to be infallible: Therefore, he must have held the four above mentioned councils to be so. Saint Leo says, that “ *the council of Chalcedon was assembled by the Holy Ghost.*”—St. Cyril asks, “ *How it can be doubted but Christ did preside in the great and holy council of Ephesus?*”—And St. Athanasius says, “ *The word of God, as declared by the Nicene council, does remain for ever.*” All this is certainly the language of persons holding the church infallible, when she decides by a general council. But let us now hear them speak concerning the church at large. St. Ireneus, who lived in the age immediately after Christ and his Apostles, says, “ *You are not to seek from others the truth which you have easily from the church, with which the Apostles have deposited all truth, that whoever desires it may have it from the living waters.*”—St. Cyprian, in the third century, writes thus:—“ *Though great numbers of such stubborn and self-willed people, as will not submit, become deserters, yet the church will never fall from Christ; which church is the people united to the priests, and the flock following their pastor. The spouse of Christ cannot become an adulteress: She is uncorrupt and pure.*” This passage surely holds up, that the church will always maintain the doctrine which Christ taught, and that she cannot be corrupted by errors.

This is just what Catholics now believe and teach, and what they mean by infallibility: I wish that this observation may be carefully retained by those who desire to enter into the merits of

the question debated between Mr. Lesslie and myself. For whenever, in my hearing, the Protestants have spoken of the church's infallibility, they have uniformly affixed to it the idea of impeccability; whereas, by that term Catholics mean nothing more than the church's incapacity of teaching errors in faith. Saint Cyril, of Alexandria, says, "*that the church of Christ is so settled and established, as never to fall, but to bear up against the gates of hell, and so to remain for ever.*" Here the doctrine of infallibility is as strongly asserted as words can express it. Saint Austin, on the words, *They have gone astray from the womb and spoken lies*, remarks: "It is in the church's womb that truth remains. Whoever is separated from this womb of the church must of necessity speak lies. I say, he must of necessity speak lies, who refuses to be conceived, or being conceived, has been thrown out by the mother."

Again, "The holy church, the one church, the true church, the Catholic church fights against all heresies. Fight she may, but she cannot be overcome. All heresies have gone out from her like useless branches leapt off from the vine; but *she* remains in *her root*, in *her vine*, in *her charity*: the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." I might swell my quotations to a volume; but from these few I leave it to the reader's own judgment, whether the Fathers were Protestants or Catholics on the subject of infallibility. They wrote against heretics, who all pretended that Christ's church had failed. They, on the contrary, maintained, "that it was *an abominable and accursed calumny* to say that she had failed or could fail:—That it is in the church's womb that the truth remains:—That, being the spouse of Christ, she cannot become an adulteress, but will always be pure and uncorrupt in her doctrine —That she will remain in her root to the end of the world." Whence it follows, that their writings as fully condemn our reformed brethren, as they did the heretics of their times, and that not only the word of God but the whole current of antiquity is flatly against them; unless they call to their aid the old enemies of the church, whom they, as well as we, regard as justly expelled from her bosom. Let them look back as far as they please into primitive ages, they will find only heretics who pleaded for a fallible church; and Protestants do nothing but revive their arguments, and turn them against our church. Let then the reformed churches put the fairest glosses they please upon their separation from the church of Rome, still the antiquity of her doctrine, maintained by those eminent Doctors who certainly delivered the public faith of the church of their times, is an argument of such weight as will ever carry the cause in the judgment of those persons in whom the love of this world has not stifled all sense of a future state. [N. B. If any person should wish to see the book
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and page whence I have taken the passages which I have quoted, I am ready to satisfy them. The reason why I have not marked them is, that I might not uselessly add to the bulk of my paper, knowing that the works of the Fathers, especially the genuine editions, are scarcely to be found in these States]

I now advance to the discussion of the question, whether the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament be the *complete perfect* and *infallible rule* of our faith.* On this head, I suppose, for principle, that the Scripture cannot be the *complete perfect* and *infallible* rule of faith, if we have no certainty of its divine inspiration but through the church; if what Protestants call Scripture is neither entire nor pure; and if they themselves believe and practise many things which are not contained therein. All this I shall attempt to prove.

FIRST. I say, that we can have no certainty of the Divinity of the Scriptures, but through the Catholic church. I know that our adversaries, when pressed on this point, have had recourse to the internal evidence of the books, to private inspiration, &c. But at present (as far as I can discover) all those who are consistent, admit that the grand reason for admitting the books of Scripture as canonical, is the constant and unvarying testimony of the Catholic church. This has ever determined and still determines all Christians to receive the Bible as a divine book. If I thought that this assertion was not generally regarded as true, I should enlarge upon it; but this I believe to be unnecessary.

SECONDLY. I maintain that the Protestant Bible is neither entire nor pure. Here let me previously declare, that I have no design to lessen the credit or authority of the Holy Bible. It is a common accusation of our adversaries, that we set light by the written word of God; that we undervalue and condemn the sacred Scripture. This calumny is carefully propagated among the

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people,

* Those who hold the Bible to be the sole rule of faith, must suppose that the Christians had no rule of faith from the death of Jesus Christ until the Apostles wrote, which was a long time after the establishment of Christianity.—They must also suppose that every thing which regards religion has been written.—These two suppositions cannot be supported.—The first is destroyed by the commission given to the Apostles; “Go, teach all nations.”—the second formally contradicts the sacred writers, who refer us to tradition on several points.—Deut. xxvii. 7—2. Thess. ii. 17—2. Tim. ii. 2.

Our erring brethren vainly boast of the clearness of the Scriptures.—I ask them the meaning of the text, “*This is my body*.” Each of them explains it in a different manner. These words signify, (says Luther) This bread is truly united to my body. That is not the sense (replies Zuinglius) but it means, This bread is the sign or figure of my body, which is not present. You are both deceived, (says Calvin) here is the true explanation of the passage: This bread which you are going to eat is not united to my body, nevertheless, when you eat it, my flesh is really united to you. If the Scripture be so plain, why these different interpretations of so capital a text?

people, who as firmly believe it as any other part of their creed. Whereas all who know us, see plainly, that we have the highest respect and veneration for the Bible, receiving and honouring it as the pure word of God, neither rejecting, nor so much as doubting of, the least title from Genesis to Revelations. Many Catholics carry their veneration for it so far, that they always read it on their knees with the greatest humility and reverence, not bearing to see it prophaned in any way, nor so much as a torn leaf of it put to any improper use. It is this very esteem for God's word that makes our church so jealously watch against those who attempt to corrupt it, and anxiously give the alarm.

1. The Protestant Bible is not entire. If it be true, (as they know in conscience it is) that the only *real* reason which can be assigned for receiving the Bible as divinely inspired, is the testimony of the Catholic church, that Bible cannot surely be *entire* from which are expunged several books, which lean on that testimony equally with the others. Now, besides the books which our Protestant brethren receive in common with us, the primitive church admitted Tobias, Judith, the rest of Esther, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Barnab, with the epistle of Jeremiah, the Song of the three children, the Idol, Bell and the Dragon, the story of Susannah, and the two first books of the Maccabees.

The reasons commonly assigned for rejecting these are, that they are not in the Jewish Canon, and that their inspiration was once called in doubt by the church. But if these were good reasons, a great part of the other books might also be rejected. It is not from the synagogue, but from the church that Christians receive the true Scriptures. The third council of Carthage, (held in 397) which was very numerous, and which has always been famous in the church, gives the same catalogue of the sacred books which we now receive; and the great Saint Austin, who was present at that council, and subscribed to it, makes the same enumeration. I could here make out a long list of illustrious Fathers and Doctors, who have enforced their doctrines by quotations from the above mentioned books, as well as from the others which our erring brethren esteem canonical. I could also adduce the words of Brentius, Dr. Covel, Dr. Fulk, and other Anti-Catholic writers, to prove that the primitive church admitted all these books as of divine authority. But the bounds prescribed forbid it.

2d. The Protestant Bible is not pure. How indeed should it be so, since the translators profess to follow the Hebrew and Greek copies which are generally allowed to have been corrupted by the Jews and the Oriental heretics? and to despise the vulgate, which, from Saint Austin down to this day, has ever been regarded as the best version by all able judges? Yes, the bitterest enemies of our

our church, as Mr. Whitaker, Dr. Dove, Dr. Covel, Dr. Humphrey, Molinæus, Conrad, Pellican, and even Beza himself, all commend the integrity, the learning, the fidelity and piety of Saint Jerom, its translator. The vulgate was made at a time when the Hebrew and Greek fountains were yet clear and untroubled. This, therefore, ought to have been regarded as the original, and to have been translated by the reformers for the use of Christians; their not having done this, is a strong presumption that their translation is not wholly pure. That the English version is grossly defective, I prove from the petition presented to King James, which declares, that "The book of Psalms alone differs from the Hebrew, in at least two hundred places;"—from the words of Mr. Carlisle, who asserts, that "the English translators have depraved the sense of Scripture, obscured the truth, and deceived the ignorant; that they show themselves to love darkness more than light, falsehood more than truth;"—from the declaration of the Ministers of the diocese of Lincoln, who affirm, that "the English translation takes away from, and adds to, the text, and that sometimes to the changing or obscuring the meaning of the Holy Ghost; that it is absurd and senseless in many places"—and (that I may not fatigue the reader by quotations) from Mr. Broughton, who assures us, "that the English version perverts the text of the Old Testament in eight hundred and forty-eight places, and causes millions of souls to run to eternal flames." These Protestant invectives against the English version, were made, it is true, before it was revised by King James; but, as the greatest part of its errors were left untouched, they equally regard, for the most part, the Protestant Bible as it now stands.

In order to set my assertion, that the Protestant translation is neither faithful nor pure, in a clearer light, I will now point out a few of its gross falsifications.

The first corruptions of the Protestant Bible, which I shall remark, concern the sacrifice and sacrament of the altar. We read, (Gen. xiv. 18.) that Melchisedek king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; "for or because he was the priest of the most high God." The word for assigns the reason of his bringing forth the bread and wine, viz. that he might offer them in sacrifice to God. The English translators knowing, that, as Christ is called a Priest according to the order of Melchisedek, this offering which Melchisedek made of bread and wine, must have been typical of the sacrifice of the New Testament, and, consequently, that Christ, to fulfil this type, must have established a sacrifice, and in it used the same matter by which that ancient priest characterized his ministry, and distinguished it from all others before him; they, I say, knowing this, have purposely put *and* instead of

of *for*, though in many other places where the sense demanded it, they have rendered the same Hebrew particle (*vau*) *for* or *because*. They must have known that the ancient Fathers of the church, as Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, Saint Ambrose, Saint Jerom, Saint Austin, Saint John of Damascus, Theophylactus and others, had all pointed out the conformity between Christ and Melchisedeck from this very circumstance, viz. that they both offered bread and wine in sacrifice.

It is said (1 Cor. 11. 27.) according to both Latin and Greek (*vel. ē*) "Whoever shall eat this bread *or* drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." The Protestant translators, that they may from this text infer the necessity of communicating under both kinds, substitute the conjunctive *and* for *or*, reading: "*Whoever shall eat this bread and drink,*" &c. The disjunctive *or* evidently implies that the crime of an unworthy communion may be committed in one or both kinds, and consequently that it is lawful to receive under one kind alone. In effect, all antiquity attests that Christians, in divers cases, did formerly communicate under a single kind. Thus infants received only the precious blood: Thus the sick, the hermits in the wilderness and others, were communicated under the appearance of bread alone. Even the Apostles seem to have administered the Sacrament in one kind only; for, in their Acts, (chap. ii. 42. xx. 7.) the Christians are said to have "*continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread,*" and to have "*come together to break bread*" Christ himself, when sitting with his two disciples at Emmaus, is said (Luke xxiv. 30.) to have "*taken bread, to have blessed and given it to them.*" The best commentators, both Catholic and Protestant, interpret these passages of the sacramental bread. And as they make no mention of the chalice or wine, we hence justly conclude, it is lawful (in imitation of Christ and his Apostles) to communicate the faithful under a single kind. Nor can it be pretended, that, thus acting, we do them any wrong or deprive them of any grace, since Christ in his present glorified state cannot be divided, but must be whole and entire, wherever he is at all. His blood, soul and divinity, must be wherever is his body, and his body, soul and divinity, must be wherever is his blood. This is the doctrine of all sensible Protestants, as well as ours. The text of St. Paul must then have been designedly falsified, to make the people believe, that we mangle the Sacrament when we refuse the cup to the laity, and that there is a strict obligation of receiving it in both kinds.

The next corruptions, which I shall mention, respect the continency of the Priests. Celibacy, or a single life, has been annexed to the Christian Priesthood ever since the Apostolic times.

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But the Protestant translators, who felt no vocation to this holy life, attempt to make many texts speak in defence of their own incontinency.

St. Paul (Phil. iv. 3.) calls a fellow-bishop his "sincere companion." This text, contrary to the original word, which is masculine, is rendered in King James's version *true yoke fellow*, and *this* on purpose to sound in English *man and wife*, though St. Paul expressly declares (1 Cor. vii. 7, 8,) that he was unmarried, and that he wished others to be as he was.

It is with the same design that they read (Heb. 13. 4.) "Marriage is honourable in all;" thereby insinuating, that it is honourable for all persons to marry, even though they are devoted to chastity by vow, as are priests, monks and nuns. This text of the Apostle is an exhortation to married people not to abuse the sanctity of their state by any liberties or irregularities contrary to it; which is clear from the reason that is added, "*f.r fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*" This, as well as the preceding and following verses, contains a command, and not an affirmation, and the very same phrasology is translated as an exhortation in the next verse. "*Let your conversation (or manners) be without covetousness.*" Could they have any good design in making the Apostle, in this one verse alone, speak in the indicative mood, while in the others of a similar structure, they make him speak in the imperative?

To palliate the sensuality, and to excuse the sacrilegious marriages of the first reformers, the English Bible makes our Saviour say, (Matt. xix. 11.) "all *cannot* receive this saying," i. e. all cannot become eunuchs, or lead, not merely a chaste, but a virginal life, for the kingdom of heaven. The text thus rendered, implies, that it is impossible to live continent;—whereas Christ only says, "all do not receive this saying," i. e. because they will not, for God is ever ready to grant this, and every other grace, to those who seriously and humbly crave it from him.

The same translation makes St Paul say (1 Cor. vii. 9.) "If they cannot contain, let them marry;" which is expressly contrary to the Greek, where we read, "If they do not contain themselves, let them marry." Here the Apostle speaks not of such as have pledged their faith, and vowed their chastity to God, but of those who are free, whom he advises to marry rather than to be burnt with unlawful lust here, and for unlawful lust hereafter. The same advice is now frequently inculcated by Catholic divines. But as to those who have vowed to the Lord, they must not retract, lest *they have condemnation for casting off their first faith*" (1 Tim. v. 12.) They must use other means to prevent this burning, particularly fasting and prayer, by which the flesh will be kept

kept in due subjection, and the gift of continency obtained from God.

The Protestants, in order to exclude entirely from their Bible the idea of penance and satisfaction for sin, constantly render *repent*, the word (*metánoieitē*), which all the doctors and fathers of the church ever translated *do penance* (*agite pœnitentiam*.) The word *repent* not only does not give the sense of the Greek, but is proved a false translation by the phrase, in *sackcloth and ashes*, which is added to several of the texts (Matt. xi. 21. Luke x. 13.) These additions determine the sense of the original to something more than repentance or amendment of life. All who have any acquaintance with Christian antiquity know, that there was in the church a place assigned for the penitents, who, for a time, were excluded from the Sacrament, and were condemned to fasting, and prostration on the ground, sackcloth, &c. for a greater or less space of time, according to the degree of their crimes. The English translators could not have been ignorant, that when Sozomen, Socrates, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and others, mention persons who performed the penance enjoined them; that when the Councils of Laodicea, of Nice, &c. fix the time of penance to offenders proportionable to their faults; that when they speak of shortening or prolonging the days of penance; they could not have been ignorant, I say, that the same Greek word was employed which is used in Scripture. They must also have known that the word, which, in all those passages, so evidently implies a prescribed time of satisfaction for sin by rigorous penalties, could not be truly rendered *repentance*.

To render all images odious, and to make the word sound to the ears of the vulgar synonymous with idols, they have falsified several texts which I shall not now quote. I shall just mention two passages, into which they have thrust *image*, without any other reason than to decry the practice of our church. They say, (Rom. xi. 4.) "the seven thousand have not bowed the knee to the *image* of Baal," instead of *to Baal*.—They read (Acts xix. 35.) "the *image* which fell down from Jupiter," in place of *Jupiter's offspring*. If the translators were disposed to falsify the text, they should have added, *idol*, rather than *image*; but this would not have answered their purpose of throwing contempt on the mother church. They wished to persuade the people that *image* and *idol* were the same thing, and equally forbidden by God, and consequently, that Popery is *idolatry*, for admitting the use of images. They have but too well succeeded in their wicked design.

Protestants pretend, that there never was, from the beginning of the world, any other place, after this life, except heaven and hell. In consequence of this doctrine, they hold, that all the Saints of the Old Testament went not into the third place, called Abraham's
bosom

bosom, or to the limbo of the Fathers, but ascended to heaven ; and therefore that Christ was not the first man who entered there. It follows also from this opinion, that the Redeemer did not descend into a third place, in the Creed called *hell*, or *hades*, to deliver the ancient Fathers, and to carry them triumphantly with him to heaven ; and that, therefore, this article must be expunged from the Creed (as it was by some of the first, and is now by many latter, reformers) or refer to our Saviour's body in the grave, or else to his suffering the torments of the damned (as Calvin impiously explained it.) Jacob, (Gen. xxxvii. 35.) in grief for the death of his beloved Joseph, exclaims, "*I will go down to my son into hell mourning ;*" that is, into limbo, the place where the souls of the just were received before the death of our Redeemer. This text, in the reformed Bible, is most absurdly rendered *into the grave*. For allowing that the word *hell* is sometimes taken for the grave, it cannot be so taken in this passage ; since Jacob did not believe his son to be in the grave, but devoured by a wild beast : he could not therefore mean to go down to him thither, but to the place of rest where he believed his soul to be. No soul ever entered heaven before the ascension of Christ, "*the way into the holies being not yet made manifest,*" (Heb. ix. 8.) because he himself was "*to dedicate that new and living way,*"—(Heb. x. 20.) to open it by his passion and to enter it in his person ; therefore the common phrase of the Old Testament concerning holy men, when they died, was :—"They descended into hell," i. e. the general receptacle of good souls. So we say in the Creed, that the Saviour himself "*descended into hell,*" according to his soul.

The Protestant version says (Ps. lxxxix. 48.) "*What man shall deliver his soul from the hands of the grave ?*" This (besides it being nonsense to speak of delivering a soul from the grave) is directly contrary to the original, which is *hell*. I may here remark once for all, that whenever the English translators perceived the word *hell* to signify the place where reposed the ancient Patriarchs, they have rendered it *grave*. These palpable falsifications, which are but a very small part of those which are contained in the Protestant Bible, are all I shall point out at present.

I will conclude this head by one simple question, viz.—How can Protestants adopt for the only rule of their faith, a book which has been so grossly adulterated by wicked and designing men ?

The observations which I have here made, must, I think, cause many serious reflections to all those who are sincerely desirous of salvation.

I shall now proceed to prove in the third place, that the Bible cannot be the Protestants's complete and perfect rule, because they

are forced to admit many points of faith and practice not contained therein.

1. All Protestants pretend, (and this is one of the fundamental articles of their faith) that nothing ought to be believed as essential to the Christian religion, which is not contained in the Bible : And yet, with the same breath that they declare this, they affirm that the Bible, and the Bible too as they have it in their translation, is their complete and perfect rule. But I wish to know in what text of Scripture is contained the assertion, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and perfect rule of a Christian's faith? In what part of the Bible is it affirmed, that the books, beginning with Genesis, and ending with Revelations, are divinely inspired?—Can any Protestant shew us, in the Bible, a catalogue of the books which we are bound to revere as sacred? If they could even do this, we should not be obliged to believe the testimony of the Bible in its own favour, until we had proved its divine inspiration by some other medium.—And what could this medium be, but the authority of Christ's church, to which the sacred oracles were committed?—But, if our dissenting brethren can show us no declaration from the Bible, that it is the complete and perfect rule of Christian faith, and that such and such books are canonical, then they are obliged to confess, that the Scriptures are not the complete and perfect rule of faith, and consequently, that there are some things to be believed, which are not therein contained.

2. The Protestants believe that infant baptism is valid. Yet how can we be sure that an infant, which is just born and which has no use of reason or liberty, can receive the remission of original sin, and become the child of God? This is such a mystery to human reason, that the Anabaptists deny it, founded on the text :—“ *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* ”—These words seem to prove that actual faith, of which infants are incapable, is a disposition necessary for baptism. If therefore we had nothing but Scripture for our guide, this point would be at least doubtful; and yet it is of such importance that the salvation of millions of souls depends on its certainty.

3. It is certain from Scripture, that the Apostles administered the sacrament of baptism by immersion, or by plunging the person into the water. This is so clear in the Bible, that I have often wondered how those who contend for infant baptism can, with any sincerity, pretend the contrary. For several ages, however, this practice has been changed, and the majority of Protestants believe with us, that baptism is valid which is performed by the effusion of a small quantity of water on the subject of it.

4. Our

4. Our Protestant brethren, as well as we, hold that Christians are not obliged to observe the legal institutions prescribed by Moses, as, to abstain from blood, and from things strangled; yet the Scripture no where teaches that these things can now be lawfully eaten:—On the contrary, the Apostles expressly forbid them to Christians (Acts xv. 29.) Could Scripture alone ever certify us, that this prohibition was made only out of deference to the synagogue, and that it was to last only for a time?

5. Protestants observe Sunday instead of Saturday, or the first day instead of the seventh, and I imagine that the most of them would deny the possibility of salvation to one who should do all manner of servile work on Sunday, and, with the Jews, keep Saturday in its stead. Now they cannot produce any command to sanctify Sunday, as we can to keep holy the Saturday (Exod. xx.) The Bible, then, is not their complete rule on this head. The most we can derive thence respecting this practice is conjecture. St. John indeed speaks of the Lord's Day (Rev. i. 10) but he does not tell us what day of the week this was; much less does he tell us that this day was to take place of the Sabbath ordained in the decalogue. St. Luke also speaks of the disciples meeting together to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7.) And St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 2) orders, that, on the first day of the week, the Corinthians should lay by in store what they designed to bestow in charity on the faithful in Judea: But neither the one, nor the other, tells us, that the first day of the week was to be henceforward the day of worship, and the Christian Sabbath. These texts can never surely afford a sufficient warrant for abolishing the express command—“*Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath.*” From this short enumeration, it appears, that many points of Protestant faith and practice are not grounded on Scripture, and, consequently, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are not (as Mr. Lesslie asserts) the complete and perfect rule of Christian faith and practice.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary,

TO THE REV. MR. LESSLIE,

REV. SIR,

I have, I think, answered all your objections against the infallibility of the church; I have expected your reply for a full year; and, as none has appeared, I have a right to conclude that

you do not find the Catholic doctrine on this point totally unscriptural and absurd. Permit me, dear Sir, from the great desire I have of your salvation, to expose to you, in a summary way, those marks which so evidently distinguish the Roman church from all others, as to prove her alone to be the one founded by Jesus Christ. As God (according to all Christians) has imposed on men the indispensable obligation of believing, embracing, and practising the religion which he has revealed, he must have rendered it so bright and visible, he must have clothed it with such characteristic marks of truth, that no well disposed, sincere seeker could avoid finding it. If God should permit his church to have only ambiguous marks of truth, or such as are common to other religions, and should suffer it to be, as it were, buried in darkness and obscurity, he himself would be our deceiver. But as God can neither deceive, nor be wanting to, his creatures, the marks of his church must be more conspicuous than those which distinguish the sects that are separated from her. Now, as there are many religious societies in the world widely different in their faith, and all calling themselves Christians; which of all these is most distinguished by marks of truth, and, consequently, which are we bound to embrace, in order to secure our salvation? Surely, to an attentive mind, no society will appear to possess so many great, shining, singular, and even divine marks of truth, as the Roman Catholic church.

I earnestly beseech all who do not mean to sport away their souls, to weigh well the following considerations.

1. The first mark of truth in the Roman church is, her invariable existence, from Jesus Christ, to the present day, by a continual succession of sovereign pontiffs and bishops, without the least interruption. This church is the only one that can be called perpetual, for two reasons; because no one can point out her beginning or origin after Christ, and because she has an innate principle of duration.

1st. As the good grain precedes the tares, so the true church preceded all heresy: We can name the authors of all the sects, the place where and the time when they began. The Arian heresy, of which the priest Arius was author, began in Egypt in 316. The Nestorian heresy, of which the bishop Nestorius was author, began in Thrace, in 429. We know the exact time when Luther began to dogmatize in Germany, Calvin in France, and Zuinglius in Switzerland; and thus we can trace the origin of all other sects.

Before 200 years ago there were no Lutheran or Calvinist churches; but the Roman church was then reigning, and even before the times of Arius, Nestorius, Cerinthus, Ebion, and all other heresiarchs: Nor can our adversaries point to any period since

since the Apostles, in which the Roman church was not yet in being, and did not make a conspicuous figure. The flame of this church has never been extinguished since it was lighted up by Jesus Christ, and placed by St. Peter on the candlestick at Rome. From that moment it has ever been spreading its light throughout the whole world; that is, from St. Peter, who first established his See at Rome, down to Pius the VIth. the present Pope, we find a perpetual succession of high priests, without the least interruption.

The empire has been transferred from the Latins to the Greeks; the form of government has been often changed at Rome. The city has been several times taken, pillaged and burnt, and yet, amidst such horrible tempests and furious storms, the See of St. Peter, often without any human aid, has stood firm and immoveable. We can reckon up more than 200 heresies, of which there is scarcely a trace left behind, except in the decrees of the councils by which they were condemned. How many heresies, supported by force of arms, and by the protection of princes and people, have threatened nothing less than the total extirpation of the Catholic church! yet all these formidable sects are now no more. The church of Rome alone continues firm and perpetual.

2d. Nor must we be surprised that the sects rise up and die away by perpetual changes; for they have not in themselves a principle of perpetuity; that is, they have not an union of all the members with one general head, by whose authority the pastors are maintained in the order of succession, and the faithful kept in the unity of faith.

Luther and Calvin like all other sectaries, succeeded to no one; but both, despising the authority of the sovereign pontiff, established themselves heads of the church, and interpreted the Bible as they pleased, adding, diminishing, or changing, according to their fancy.

Now, as Luther and Calvin withdrew from the authority of the Pope, their followers had, each, the right to withdraw from their controul. Hence it is, that all the sects are divided and subdivided, until, weakened by their divisions, they fall at last into total ruin.

The principles of the Catholics are very different. Their first and inviolable law is, to refer all controversies to the judgment of the church, and never to separate from the chair of St. Peter, in which resides the Apostolic authority, and which is the centre of unity.

According to the holy Fathers, "the Apostolic See was established at Rome, that by this See unity might be every where preserved,

served, and that he might be declared schismatic, who against this See should erect another."

II. The second mark of the truth of our religion is, its firmness and stability. It has been attacked by all the powers of earth and hell. The heathen Emperors omitted nothing to stifle it at its birth. Several different nations have more than once pillaged Rome, massacred or banished the Popes. All the schismatics and heretics, down to the present day, have done every thing to exterminate the Catholics, and to overturn the Papal See.

Yet all these formidable attacks have not only been fruitless, but have even served to render the mother church more solid and unshaken. This is a perpetual, a standing miracle. "The finger of God is here;" and in this the promise of Christ is most visibly fulfilled, that "the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church."

III. The third sign that the truth is with our church is, that all the sects, which have attacked her, and which called themselves Christ's true church, have fallen. Why? because they were not founded on the *rock*, but on the *sand*. We can scarcely find a few miserable remains of them in the East, and there they have adopted so many new errors that they are not now the same sects. The Roman Catholic church alone subsists for almost 1800 years. Who is it that supports her? If she had fallen into error (as innovators have always said, and now say) would God have so visibly protected her? Would she not have shared the fate of all other false sects? Yet God does defend her. What! would God have defended for almost 18 centuries a false religion, while he reduced the true one to ruin and destruction? This shocks and revolts all the ideas which we ought to entertain of the all-perfect Deity.

IV. The *fourth* mark of the truth of the Roman church is, that she went out from no other, whereas all the sects went out of her by an open and public rupture. History attests (and our adversaries do not deny) that there were Popes in the four first ages, the time of pure Christianity, who had succeeded to each other ever since St. Peter, the vicar of Jesus Christ. Several Fathers have given us the names of them all, and the exact time of their nomination and death. Those of the fifth age succeeded to those of the fourth; those of the sixth to those of the fifth; and thus they have gone on, in an uninterrupted line, down to the present Pope.

The Roman Christians were always Catholics, and Papists (as the Protestants call us :) They were before all sects: They began under the pontificate of St. Peter, and, consequently, their religion never went out of any other.

But

But all heretics, before their revolt, were Catholics and Papists. Simon the magician, the first author of heresy, was certainly of the religion of St. Peter, the first Pope, and who was established by Jesus Christ. Simon was then a Papist before his heresy, and, consequently, the Papists were before Simon, the first heretic, and therefore before all the sects. Arius was a Priest, Luther was a Monk, and Calvin was a Canon, in the Roman church, of which the Popes were the heads.

These heresiarchs, as well as all others, were, before they began their sects, Papists, that is, subject to the Popes to whom they had publicly professed submission.

They all separated, therefore, from popery, and all went out from the Roman church, which was founded by St. Peter, who was sent immediately by Jesus Christ.

V. The *fifth* mark of truth in the Roman church is, that she is the *only* one that carries the gospel to the infidels, and converts them to Jesus Christ. The sectaries exert their zeal only in making proselytes from among the Catholics. We do not see their preachers undertake to draw the idolatrous nations to their religion, and courageously expose themselves to martyrdom, for the propagation and glory of their faith. All their societies for propagating their religion are a mere name. Their zeal is satisfied when they have distributed a few Bibles among those whom they ought first, in charity, to teach how to spell—and yet no people on the globe has ever had a fairer opportunity, than the English nation, to spread the Christian religion both in the East and West-Indies—we hear, however, of no one heathen nation that has renounced their idols, and embraced the reformed faith—America is filled with savage tribes. While the Catholic missionaries, by their zealous and laborious exertions, have brought over to the mother-church all the idolaters within the French and Spanish territories; what considerable tribes have embraced the reformation? There are, indeed, a few dissenting ministers called missionaries; but none of them advance into the heart of the Indian countries. They all (as far as I am informed) fix their abode among the tribes that are partly civilized by their commerce with the whites, and that border very nearly upon them.

Is not this defect of zeal an evident proof that they have not the Spirit of God, nor of the Apostles, who preached to the whole world, according to their Lord's command—“*Preach to every creature?*” (Mark xvi. 15) On the contrary, this Apostolic zeal was always hereditary in the Roman church. For (without speaking of the five first centuries) it is certain that, in the sixth age, St. Augustin, a monk, who was sent by St. Gregory, Pope, converted the English nation to the Christian faith. In the seventh age, the Flemish were converted by preachers sent from

from the Popes. In the eight century, the Germans were converted by popish missionaries. In the ninth age, the Sclavonians, the Poles, the Danes, and many other nations, were gained to the Roman church by Apostolic priests. In the eleventh century, all Hungary, with Stephen its king, was brought to obey the faith through preachers commissioned by the Popes. In the twelfth age, the Norwegians, the Finlanders, the Livonians, and many other northern nations, were converted by the zeal of Pope Adrian the 4th, an Englishman. And in the same century, establishments were made at Tripoli and Algiers in Africa, by which many Mahometans were won over to Christianity. In the thirteenth age, God raised up in his church several religious orders, which, by their zealous preaching and labours, brought back to the Catholic faith great numbers of the Albigenses and other heretics, and also opened the eyes of many schismatics and infidels in Greece, Tartary, &c. In the fourteenth century, a great part of the Saracens were added to the church by that great apostolic man, St. Vincent Ferrier. In the two last centuries, St. Francis Xavier, and several other missionaries, all sent by the Popes, have converted to the faith many idolatrous nations in the East. They formed in Japan, China, Cochin-China, &c. millions of the most fervent Christians that ever illustrated the church of God, many of whom, especially in Japan, have generously sealed their faith with their blood.—St. Francis alone is supposed to have gained as great a number of idolaters to the church, as Luther and Calvin had seduced of Catholics from her bosom. Very great is still the number of holy priests, who are yearly sent into the Indies, into China and America.

These are not cunningly devised stories to amuse : they are public facts. Several of those who were educated with me in the same ecclesiastical seminary, and who were my intimate friends, have bidden adieu to all their dearest connections at home (and some of them were of the noblest families,) and have exiled themselves for life, to gain souls to Christ—and I call heaven to witness, that nothing but an ardent desire of the salvation of my countrymen has brought me back from Europe, to a life of poverty, contempt, persecution and labour.

VI. The *sixth* mark of truth in our church is, her unity and indivisibility of faith. This church, ever since her first establishment, has always believed, in the first place, all the articles revealed by Jesus Christ, by his Evangelists and Apostles ; and wherever there are men of her communion, there is the same faith.

2d, She has never varied in her professions and formularies of faith ; for whenever any point of doctrine has been once decided by a general council, all succeeding councils have regarded that point

point as an article of divine revelation ; nor have our general councils ever contradicted each other in a *single point of doctrine*.

3d. She has a sure and infallible rule for preserving the unity of her faith, viz. the decisions of the general councils, confirmed by the Pope, or, when no council is assembled, the decisions of the Pope *expressly or tacitly* accepted by the body of bishops.

These councils (as was just remarked) have never varied ; for since the first, which was held at Jerusalem by the Apostles, they have always begun by approving and confirming the acts of those that preceded.

4th. In fine, the Catholic church retrenches from her bosom all those who alter, retrench, or add a single point to her faith — Thus she preserves her unity.

Now, none of the sects have ever had this unity—for, 1st, They have believed certain articles at one time, which they have denied at another. They have increased or diminished points of faith, according to the interest of their party, or the necessity of the times. Thus the Calvinists approved the doctrine of the Lutherans, though different from their's, to fortify each other, by uniting together.

2d. They have often varied in their formularies of faith ; and, though they are always talking about articles *fundamentally* necessary to salvation, they could never yet agree upon their number—some say ten, some six, some four, and some only two. Is this unity of faith ?

3d. They have no sure rule for preserving unity, since they believe their very synods subject to error. For this reason the Gomarists and the Arminians continued to hold the same doctrines, even after the judgment of the synod of Dort.

4th. Finally, we do not see them retrench from their communion those who differ from them in some articles : Thus they did not excommunicate the Gomarists nor the Arminians. They even sometimes unite with other sects, very different in faith.

It is therefore only in the Catholic church that there is a perfect unity of faith : “ *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* ” (Ephes. iv. 5.)

VII. The seventh mark of the truth of our religion is, that it is more holy than any other—all the rest give much to flesh and blood, by retrenching the austerities, the fasts and the most difficult sacraments. It is natural to suppose, that persons, who are loosed from the restraints of *confessing and punishing their sins*, should more easily yield to all the inclinations of corrupt nature, than those who believe themselves bound in conscience to confess their most secret crimes, to perform the penance imposed on them by the priest, to restore whatever they possess unjustly, to make reparation of honour, if they have wronged their neighbour in his fame, and to

avoid

avoid all the immediate occasions of relapse into sin. The Catholic religion, then, which imposes all these restraints, must necessarily be holier than all others.

I do not, however, accuse the sectaries of *directly and positively* encouraging libertinism or vice. This would be a misrepresentation, (and we always carefully avoid misrepresenting them)—I mean, that Protestant principles, if followed would lead to an unholy life. By reforming away the sacrament of penance, for instance, they have deprived their religion of the most powerful remedy against vice, and have broken down the strongest fence from about God's law. The restraints of shame and fear, the one of confessing the other of punishing their sins, being removed, corrupt nature set at liberty will be too powerful for the commandments left thus unguarded.

It was a full conviction of this truth, that made several of the reforming Ministers of Stratsburgh petition the Magistrates for the re-establishment of confession.

Our church does not merely prescribe austere maxims, but she reduces them to practice—She alone performs the most rigorous fasts and mortifications—She alone observes the evangelical councils of poverty, chastity and obedience, and that in innumerable communities of men and women.

VIII. The eight mark of truth in our church, is, its visibility.—Our adversaries grant, that the true church must be somewhere among the different *visible* societies that exist in the world—for, if “God will have all men saved, and, for this purpose, come to the knowledge of the saving truth,” and if out of the true church, which ever it be, there is no salvation, this true church must be necessarily visible; otherwise men would be excuseable for not entering it. No one, surely, can be blamed for not embracing a religion, which he cannot find. It is therefore evident to reason, that the true church of Christ, which is the way to salvation, must be always *visible*. Scripture also comes in here to the aid of reason; for Jesus Christ declares, that his church is a city, situated on a mountain which cannot be hidden; that it is a great *candle* placed in a candlestick to enlighten all around; and indeed in an *invisible* church, the commands of Christ could neither be obeyed by the pastors nor by the sheep. He enjoins on the pastors to govern and admonish their flocks, to teach and baptize them, (i. e. to administer to them the sacraments) to correct sinners, to bring back wanderers, &c.—He commands the sheep to hear and obey their pastors, to tell one another's faults to the church, &c. Now all these mutual duties of the teachers and the taught, evidently pre-suppose a *visible* church; indeed they could not be complied with, in an *invisible* one.—Yet our protesting brethren pretend, that the true church had disappeared ever since the fourth century, and
was

was concealed in some corner, until about 250 years ago, when the clear-sighted Luther and Calvia found out her lurking hole, and were pleased to lead her forth in triumph, the one to Wirtemburgh, the other to Geneva. But the Roman church has always been *visible and conspicuous*, even amidst the most furious persecutions and the most horrible storms.—This *city* could never be destroyed, nor this *light* extinguished.

IX. The *ninth* mark of the truth of our church is, its catholicity or universality. It is in her *alone* that is accomplished the promise: “*I will give the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.*” It is in her *alone* that is fulfilled the command given to the Apostles: “*Go, teach all nations—Go throughout the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature*; and, consequently, she is the *only* church to which truly and properly belongs UNIVERSALITY. So fully has God’s promise of giving the nations to his church, been accomplished in ours, that almost all the inhabitants of the earth have, at different times, been under the Roman pontiffs. Though the Roman empire was amazingly extended in Asia, Africa and Europe, yet St. Leo assures us, that, in his time, the Roman church extended still much further. Since that period she has made many acquisitions. There are few nations which have not been formerly, in whole or in part subjected to the papal authority. Whatever space the sectaries now occupy, or formerly occupied, once belonged to the Roman Church, except some thinly inhabited spots in America and the Indies, of which they first took possession. Neither the Lutherans, Calvinists, nor any others, can ever apply to themselves the promise: “*I will give the Gentiles for thine inheritance.*” They cannot show that any other kingdoms or provinces were ever in their Church, except those which they now possess, and which were all torn by force from ours, and *that* only a little more than 200 years ago. For before that time they did not exist, or were invisible. Therefore the Roman church *alone* can be called *catholic* or *universal*. But not to speak of a *successive* universality, (which what I have said directly tends to prove) I assert, that the Roman church is always *actually and permanently* UNIVERSAL, as to *time*, by being the standing church of all ages, and as to *place*, by having on her side “the agreement of peoples and nations.”—Both these parts of UNIVERSALITY are clearly marked out in the Bible, as belonging to the true church. That of *time*, by Christ’s promise, that “*the gates of hell shall never (at no time) prevail against her,*” and that he “*will be with her always (omnibus diebus) even unto the end of the world;*” and by God’s declaration (Isai. lix. 21) that “*his Spirit and his words shall not depart out of her mouth, nor out of the mouth of her seed, nor out of the mouth of her seed’s seed, from henceforth and forever.*” The univer-

ality of *place* is clearly pointed out by God's promise to Abraham, that all nations shall be blessed in his seed ; which is to be no other way accomplished than by their being brought into the church of Christ, who is the *seed* here mentioned.—The same is also evident from the commission which Christ gave to the Apostles and their successors, to “ *Go and teach all nations.*” The Roman church at this time, as formerly, possesses this universality of *place*. We do not, however, take the term in its fullest and most extensive meaning. The claim of our church to *universality of place* is sufficiently proved, if she is known and visible to all nations, though they are not all her children ; if she is more extended than any one sect, or, perhaps, than all of them joined together ; and if she is actually obeyed through the principal parts of the globe. Now this is indisputably the case. For, if to Italy (where remains unshaken the Apostolic See) we add Sicily, Sardinia, the neighbouring islands, France, Spain, Portugal, half of the low countries, the greatest part of Germany, of Hungary, of Poland, and of Ireland, the Catholics in England, in South and North America, and the numberless churches founded by zealous missionaries in China, Cochinchina, Persia, and in all the Indies ; who can reasonably dispute our actual universality ? who will dare to compare so many peoples and nations with the Protestants of the West and of the North, and with the heretics and schismatics of the East ? The Roman church reaches to the South and to the North, to the East and to the West. Wherever there are heretics, there are also Catholics ; but there are Catholics in many regions where the names of any heretics are scarcely known.

X. The *tenth* mark of the truth of our church is, her resemblance to that of the primitive ages. 1. She has the same name. As *then*, so *now*, she is called CATHOLIC. “ *She is catholic,*” says St. Austin, “ *and is called catholic, not only by her own children, but, by her enemies. The heretics themselves, when with strangers, call her catholic, and, when asked where is the Catholic church, show our's, and not their own. So true it is, that they cannot appropriate to themselves the title, CATHOLIC, nor dispossess us of it.*” 2. Our church resembles the primitive one in the uninterrupted succession of her pastors. St. Irenæus, who lived in the second age, gives us a list of the Popes from St. Peter to Eleutherius ; St. Optatus continues it to Siricius ; and St. Austin to Anastasius ; from whom all our ecclesiastical historians show a direct line down to Pius the 6th, the present ruling Pope ; who acknowledges all his predecessors as the lawful vicars of Jesus Christ ; who believes whatever they believed and defined ; who condemns whatever they condemned, and approves whatever they approved. 3. The Roman church is similar to that of the first ages in her form of government. Now, as formerly, her be-
lievers

lievers are governed by the priests ; these priests are subject to the bishops, the bishops to the metropolitans or archbishops, the metropolitans to the patriarchs, and the patriarchs to the Pope, the *visible* head of the whole church. 4. Our church is the same as the primitive one in her judiciary proceedings. If any bishop be now oppressed by a cabal of his false brethren, he may appeal from their judgment to the tribunal of the Pope, as the Saints Athanasius and Chrysostom formerly did. 5. Our church bears a perfect resemblance to that of early times, in her rites and ceremonies, and in her manner of celebrating mass, of administering the sacraments, of consecrating churches and altars, of observing fasts, vigils and festivals of saints. 6. She has also the same exterior form. She, like that, distinguishes between the secular and regular clergy. She has also her monks and nuns, who profess to follow the evangelical counsels of *poverty, chastity, and obedience*, and who sing the praises of God night and day. 7. She is also perfectly similar in the interior spirit of holiness. Her bitterest enemies have done justice to the eminent virtue of Saints Xavier, Borromy, Francis of Sales, Vincent of Paul, and others, who in modern times have illustrated the Roman church. 8. In fine, the Roman society is entirely conformable to the first Christian church, as to the spirit of zeal which at this day animates her missionaries to carry the light of the gospel to the most barbarous nations, across the most tempestuous seas, and amidst the most horrible dangers. Many of these zealous preachers, in Japan, China, and other places, have, like the apostolic men of old, suffered martyrdom for the faith of Jesus Christ, and for the salvation of infidels.

As the Catholic church is the same in all times, so the heretical sects always resemble each other. The second were like the first, and the last like the second. I appeal to the great Scrutinizer of all hearts, that I have no wish to exasperate any person of whatever denomination. Zeal and love for the souls of my erring brethren guide my pen : I therefore earnestly beseech all well-meaning, truth-searching dissenters to appreciate my intentions, and not to be offended at what is now to follow.—Though they belong *externally* to heretical societies, yet, if they sincerely seek the light, if they read, hear and pray with the resolution of acknowledging it, when it strikes their minds, however it may thwart their interests, prejudices, &c. if they constantly endeavour to purify their hearts from every vice, that they may become fit temples for the Holy Ghost ; we do not regard them as guilty of heresy (in which obstinacy is a principal ingredient,) but as really belonging to *the soul* of our church. To judge, however, from the general carelessness and indifference about religious matters which now prevail, we have great reason to fear that the number of such

such persons is very small. But to resume my subject: I say that all the sects have ever resembled each other. 1st. They have always quitted the name, CATHOLIC, and taken that of their author. The Arians take their name from Arius, the Nestorians from Nestorius, the Lutherans from Luther, the Calvinists from Calvin, the Arminians from Arminius, &c. The different sects themselves call one another mutually by the names of their authors. The Lutherans and Calvinists do not call the followers of Arius and Nestorius *Catholics*; they call them Arians and Nestorians. The Arians and Nestorians, in their turn, do not call the disciples of Luther and Calvin *Catholics*; they call them Lutherans and Calvinists. And, what is still more extraordinary, the different sectaries do not blush to say; "I am a Calvinist; I am an Arminian, &c." though Christ has expressly forbidden us to *call any man master on earth*. Now what do such assertions mean? They mean, that they, who make them, profess a religion which is as much posterior to Christ, as is the time in which Calvin, Arminius, &c. lived, that is, above 1500 years; and, consequently, that they are not the disciples of Christ, but of men. "*Those who are called by the name of Marcion, (and the same may be said of every other man) are not of the church of Christ, but of the synagogue of Satan,*" says St. Jerom.—When our adversaries nickname us PAPISTS, they undesignedly do us honour; for they in effect say we belong to that ancient society, which has never changed its name, but has always been united to the POPE, the successor of St. Peter, and prince of the Apostles, and the *visible* head of Christ's church. It would be very easy to prove, that all the Christians, martyrs and confessors of the primitive church were, what Protestants now call *Papists*. 2d. All the sectaries have quitted the Roman church in which they were born, have opposed her authority, and blackened her by all sorts of invectives and calumnies. The Catholic church flourished before the birth of Arius.—That audacious man declaimed against the divinity of Jesus Christ, and gained followers. The Catholics opposed the novelty; disputes arose; and the two parties had recourse to the church for the decision of their important debate. The church assembled in council at Nice, under the authority of the Pope, who presided in it by his legates, solemnly condemned the doctrine of Arius. The Arians, dissatisfied with the sentence, exclaimed against the council, declared every where that their condemnation was manifestly contrary to God's word, and that it was necessary to separate from the Roman church, which was now become the school of error. All teachers of novelty, who have sprung up since Arius, have exactly imitated his conduct. Like him, Luther and Calvin first solicited a council to terminate the controversy between them and the Catholics; but as

soon

soon as they were condemned by the council to which they had appealed, they declaimed against its decisions, as not conformable to the pure word of God, publishing every where that the Roman church had fallen into error, and that they must flee from her as from Babylon—This conformity of conduct with the Arians is a strong presumption against our protesting brethren.

From the Apostles' time down to Luther and Calvin, those who refused submission to the judgment of the church established under the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops, were always deemed heretics. The Lutherans and Calvinists refused submission to that of the council of Trent, the representative of the *universal church*; therefore, they must be placed in the same class. They can shew no difference between themselves and their predecessors.

Of the 200 different sects that have started up since the Apostles' days, there has been no one which has not protested against its condemnation, as unjust, and which has not pretended good reasons for separating from the Roman church: and yet, the greater part of them have come to an end, or have only left some miserable remains behind.—Those which now exist, must expect the same fate.

Ever since I came to the use of reason, long before I had any thoughts of becoming a Catholic, one thing among the sectaries always appeared to me very inconceivable; this was, how they dared to treat each other as heretics.

The Lutherans and Calvinists charge the Arians, Nestorians and others with heresy, while themselves are condemned at the same tribunal, and smitten by the same anathemas. Why should Arius and Nestorius be deemed heretics, if Luther be not one also? Why should Donatus be guilty of schism, if Calvin be not involved in the same crime? If it be answered that these modern sectaries see clearly in Scripture that the Arians, &c. are heretics, they can reply, in their turn, that they see evidently, in the same Scripture, that the Lutherans and Calvinists are heretics.—Here are precisely the same reasons on both sides.

The ancient sectaries, Manes, Arius, &c. said (as their modern brethren do) that their faith was pure, being drawn from Scripture, and not from human traditions, like that of the Catholics; that they had retrenched the points which had been newly introduced into the church, and had purged her from her errors. To these frivolous, though specious reasons, the holy Fathers replied as we now do: "That the true church continues *perpetual and without interruption*, while all the sects arise and die successively, one after the other: that she is universal, being spread throughout all nations, and is therefore called CATHOLIC: that she is one by the union of all the churches to the See of St. Peter, the centre of unity: that the sects, on the contrary, are obscure *conventicles*, the

pastors of which have no predecessors in the *Apostolic line*, but come of their own authority : that they are divided kingdoms, which are destroyed by their subdivisions : that they are green *herbs* which soon wither and die, and *torrents*, which, for a moment, make a violent noise, but rapidly pass away.

Such, Sir, are the principal marks of truth in the Roman church, These are so plain and visible as to distinguish her from all the sects ; and are so many strong reasons and motives for believing her to be the true church of Christ.

I here ask our protesting brethren, with that zeal which a consciousness of truth inspires, whether they can counterbalance what I have said with as *numerous* and *strong* reasons ? If they cannot, they are bound (as they wish for salvation) to renounce their errors and enter our church. No one sectary can assign a mark of truth in his sect, which is not common to all the rest, and which will not equally oblige him to embrace all other errors, or renounce his own.

1. They will say, perhaps, that they descend in a direct line from the Apostles, but that they were for some ages invisible until the time of Luther and Calvin. But cannot all sects that ever existed, or ever shall exist, assert also their descent from the Apostles, if we dispense them from showing their succession, or permit them to tack themselves to all the ancient heretics, and when they find themselves embarrassed, to have recourse to an *invisible* church ? Most certainly they can. I have already shewn, that Christ's church is always necessarily visible.

2. They will say, perhaps, that their belief is all contained in the pure word of God ; that they find their religion clearly in the Scriptures ; and that they have compared passage with passage, &c. But every heretic, that ever arose since the New Testament was written, has made the same assertion. All who call themselves Christians, father their opinions on Christ and the Apostles ; and for this purpose cite scriptural texts. The dispute is not *often* about the existence of the words quoted, but about their sense—and as long as human minds are different, so long will texts be differently interpreted.

The way to arrive at the true meaning of Christ and the Apostles, is not to amass texts upon texts, and explain them by private judgment. Experience shows, that this method is a fertile source of error and confusion. Our aim should be, to find out how the primitive church, which received its instructions from the Apostles and their disciples, understood the texts in question. And this can never be known, but from the Catholic church, which has ever carefully preserved the whole line of tradition, as delivered by the body or majority of the holy Fathers and Doctors.

No

No other method but this, can ever settle the jarring pretensions of differing sects, who all see plain Scripture in their favour. Let the Lutherans, Calvinists and others, pretend as much as they please, that the Arians, Nestorians, &c. do not rightly understand the Bible; the Arians, Nestorians, &c. will always retort, that it is *they* who do not understand it. The being founded on Scripture is, therefore, the *common* plea of all sectaries.

3. Perhaps the sectaries will alledge in their defence, that they believe all the mysteries which are necessary to salvation. But this also is a reason *common* to all heretics. Was there ever one in the world, who did not pretend to believe every thing necessary to salvation? Two sects may even both believe the same mysteries, and yet be both false; either because they receive not all revealed mysteries, or admit others which are not revealed.

4. Will they say that their religion contains many good things, that it forbids blasphemy, theft, murder, adultery, &c.? But this is not only common to all heretical sects, but even to the Turks and heathens.

As this mark does not distinguish any one sect from the other, it is therefore insufficient to fix a preference on any one in particular.

5. If they say that their religion is holy, we reply, that it is, on the contrary, sensual, and favourable to flesh and blood, since it retrenches all corporal austerities and mortifications, all fasts and abstinences, and regards the observation of Christ's counsels of *voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience*, as superstition and an invention of the devil. Not only have Protestants retrenched all mortifications, but many of them have, by their principles, authorized all vices; for they hold, as an article of their faith, that no sin is imputed to those who believe: and Calvin, their great patriarch, blasphemously asserts, "*that the man who has faith, whatever be his crimes, is as sure of his salvation, as was Jesus Christ himself.*" His words are: "*Nobis secure spondere audemus vitam eternam esse nostram, nec regnum cœlorum posse nobis magis excidere quam ipsi Christo.*"

Agreeable to this principle, he says, that baptism not only remits all *past*, but also all *future* sins, however enormous they may be. So that a baptized Calvinist may, with impunity, commit every crime, because all is forgiven him beforehand in his baptism; and, what is sovereignly impious, this abominable sinner is as sure of his salvation at last, as was Jesus Christ himself.

6. If they say, that their church is very extensive; we reply, that many of the ancient sects, which themselves regard as heretical, were much more diffused than their's. But however extended be the whole body of sects together, it is very certain, that each particular one occupies but a very small space, compared with the vast provinces and kingdoms, which profess the Catholic faith.

7. Protestants will not surely plead in favour of their religion that it was confirmed by miracles, since, according to their doctrine, miracles ceased at the death of the Apostles, as being wholly unnecessary. But, if they should use this argument, I would ask who among them could perform these wonders? God has seldom conferred this gift on any but persons of eminent holiness—Who was *their* so highly favoured saint? Was it Luther, the author of all the modern sects? But *he*, after solemnly vowing to God a life of perpetual chastity, publicly married a nun, who was also bound by the same vow: *he* permitted the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel to have two wives at once, a thing unheard of before among Christians since the establishment of their religion, and so horrible, that the most dissolute Protestants have blushed for him, and have never dared to imitate this disorder. Such conduct was not certainly a mark of distinguished sanctity, and, consequently, very unlikely to draw upon him miraculous grace. If they should still insist, that it is a great miracle, that the reformation became so extensive in so short a time, we reply, that unluckily for their cause, the Arians performed a still greater prodigy, since their partizans were in much greater number, and their heresy much more general. If there be any miracle in the case, it is infinitely superior on the side of the Arians. Their heresy was merely speculative. It was no way more commodious to flesh and blood, than our's. The religion of the Protestants, on the contrary, takes away all the fasts, the abstinences, and the most difficult sacraments: it frees men from the yoke of obedience to the commands of the church, and makes them independent of all jurisdiction: it gives to princes the goods of the church to buy their faith and protection: it permits priests, monks and nuns to marry, and promises them heaven, after all. So far from any thing miraculous or supernatural in the progress of such a religion, it is wholly natural, human, carnal, and agreeable to corrupt nature. The miracle is, that the reformation stopped where it did.

8. If Protestants say that they have purged the church of her errors, of her superstitions and idolatry, and have restored her to her original purity, we can shew that this was always the pretension of heretics.

They all boasted that they had brought back religion to its primitive simplicity.

This argument is then common to all separatists. Besides, what authority had Marcion, or Luther, or Arius, to reform the universal church? Who were they? whence came they? who gave them their power?

There is no factious and turbulent man in the world, who may not erect himself into a reformer, and who has not as much right and authority as Luther and Calvin. He might in his turn, reform

form their reformation, as those two men pretended to reform the mother-church ; and, as all their churches, by their own confession, are fallible, it will be absolutely necessary that new reformers arise, even to the end of the world, to reform the preceding reformations, since it will be always impossible to tell certainly which reformation is true and genuine.

I think, Sir, I have not omitted any thing which can be urged in your behalf, and yet I do not find one *specific, peculiar reason* for preferring your religion to any heresy that ever arose. If all your brethren unite together, they cannot produce a single argument for your religion, which all those whom they call heretics could not as well produce for their's : and, therefore, you must either embrace all the sects, and become Marcionites, Donatists, Anabaptists, Arians, Nestorians, &c. as well as Lutherans and Calvinists, since the reasons for all are the same ; or else you must renounce them all together, and return to the bosom of the Catholic church.

Thus having pointed out the *real* marks of truth which appear in the Roman Catholic church, and the *pretended ones* which the sects boast of in their's, I now proceed to the *positive* marks of falsehood that are conspicuous in the societies which dissent from our church.

I. The *first* sign of falsity that strikes every attentive mind, is their *novelty*. We know the place and the year when they all began to appear in the world : we know the names of their authors and first adherents. Every new religion must be false, because it is *new*. The true religion must mount up to Christ and his Apostles ; and that which cannot show its genealogical descent from them, cannot be the church of God. Almost all the sects had their origin from dissolute Catholics. Such men joyfully throw off the shackles of a religion which condemns their disorders. Libertinage of heart easily produces libertinage of mind. New religions, which flatter the passions, have admirable charms for libertines, especially when they appear under the specious covering of reformation and severity. This is the mask which innovators have always assumed : but how fair soever their pretences, how severe soever their maxims of morality, their novelty is a standing mark of falsehood.

II. The *second* mark of the falsity of all the sects, is the manner of their establishment. They all first began by intrigues and secret cabals, and were afterwards propagated by factions, seditions and civil wars : I speak of those which have had any considerable extent. The sect of Luther, which has been the source of all the other modern heresies, has caused the death of innumerable persons in Europe. And the followers of Calvin have fought seventeen pitched battles in France against their lawful sovereigns.

What a religion ! what a reformation ! Granting (as they pretend) that they were persecuted for conscience sake, was this a lawful cause of rebellion ? Was it thus that the primitive Christians, whose doctrine they profess to follow, resisted the cruelty of a Nero, of a Dioclesian, &c. ? No : whole legions of the Roman troops, which were composed of Christians, laid down their arms, and suffered themselves to be butchered, like innocent lambs, without the least opposition. And when they were so numerous that they could have risen and destroyed their enemies, or else have abandoned the empire and left it almost a desert, (as Tertulian appeals to the Emperor and Senate they could have done) *even then* they used no other weapons of resistance or defence than fervent prayers to God, heroic patience, and humble, but manly, apologies presented to their persecutors.

III. A *third* mark of falsity in the sects is, their constant variation. This causes among them a horrible confusion and frightful chaos. To-day they have one formulary of faith, to-morrow another ; several different ones have appeared at the same time among those of the same sect ; as if what was true yesterday be false to-day, because interests are different. Whence all these their perpetual changes ? They proceed from their want of a sure rule of faith, which they have never found since they have abandoned the decisions of the mother-church, and withdrawn themselves from her authority. They have followed all the wanderings of their imaginations since they have become their own judges in matters of religion.

IV. A *fourth* mark of the falsity of all the sects is, their different interpretation of the Scripture. They have a strange variety of sentiment, for instance, on the words : "*This is my body.*" Luther maintained that Jesus Christ is really present in the sacrament *with the bread*. Zuinglius, on the contrary, contended that Jesus Christ was present *only in figure*. Calvin pretended to reconcile them both, by saying that Jesus Christ is really *present by faith*. Let Protestants tell us, who of the three was right, who had the Holy Spirit. They could not all have been right, since their explications were contradictory, the one denying and destroying what the other established. Two at least of these interpreters must have been *necessarily* deceived : and, as Protestants know not which of them was deceived, they know not whom to believe. At least the third may have been deceived as well as the two first ; therefore they must believe neither of them. But perhaps one of the three was right ; but (I reply) perhaps he was wrong, since he might be deceived. This incertitude reduces Protestant faith, on so important a matter, to a *mere perhaps*. The Calvinists say : they see clearly in Scripture that Calvin was right. But the Lutherans and Zuinglians affirm also, that, according

ording to Scripture, Luther and Zuinglius were evidently in the right. Neither the one, nor the other, believe themselves infallible. Of the three sects *two* must necessarily be deceived, their opinions being contradictory. No good reason can be assigned, why the *third* is not deceived, as well as the two others. The Protestants cannot, therefore, believe either the first reformers or themselves : their faith then must be always doubtful and wavering, or rather they can have no faith, because a faith which is mixed with doubts and incertitudes is imaginary and chimerical.

V. The *fifth* mark of falsity in the sects is, the form of their judgments and decisions. Among them, according to their principles, every one is judge of religion and interpreter of Scripture. Every man erects for himself a tribunal, where he decides all points of faith : And these private tribunals are subject to no *superior and sovereign one* ; for they have no such. They have indeed among them, in some places, assemblies and synods ; but these decide nothing in matters of faith. They content themselves with regulating certain points of discipline, and with imposing silence on contending parties ; but they leave the disputants in possession of their interior belief. This was the case at the famous synod of Dort. The reason why these synods decide nothing in matters of faith is, that, according to the fundamental principle of their religion, every man has a right to appeal to Scripture, and to his own private reason. It is true, that their synods obliged the people to acquiesce *interiorly* in their decisions ; though, at the same time, they declared themselves fallible, and subject to error. What extravagant contradiction ! to enjoin an *inward* submission to a tribunal which can err, and perhaps has erred ! The sects have a thousand times declared, that Scripture is clear in itself, and more than sufficient to settle all controversies ; and yet they are constantly exhibiting the most striking proof of its obscurity, by everlasting contentions among themselves about its true meaning. What is very clear strikes every one in the same manner. If Scripture be so abundantly *evident and sufficient*, one would think it useless to assemble their synods.—This, however, they do ; and, after they have examined and decided upon the point in debate, and, enjoined on all an *interior* acquiescence, they say that every one is bound to compare their decisions with the word of God, and to believe what, according to their own private reason, is grounded there. Can the private judgment of illiterate mechanics, of women who do not usually apply themselves to study, and even of the most vicious characters, be more infallible in explaining Scripture than the universal church, than all the councils from the Apostles down to our time ? Is God more interested to preserve from error individuals to whom he has made no such promise, than his whole church, to which he has engaged his ever present aid ?

Absurd !

Absurd ! to believe that the whole errs, and that the parts are guided by the Spirit of God ! But this is not the whole of their extravagance ; for every individual has as much confidence in his own judgment, as if it were *infallible*, though their explications of the same texts be often diametrically opposite to each other. I wonder that men of sense and learning (and there are very many among our dissenting brethren) do not blush at these glaring contradictions, which are so disgraceful to their sects, and which so clearly demonstrate their religion to be false ; for to submit religion to the interpretation of every private man is to open the door to all sorts of errors, to authorize all kinds of lies.

VI. The *sixth* mark of the falsity of the sects is, the bad use which they make of the holy Scriptures. All sectaries, ancient and modern, have explained the Bible according to their own private notions, and have mutually condemned each other's interpretation. The Lutherans and Calvinists condemn the explanation of the Arians, since they regard them as heretics : but, to be consistent, they ought also to condemn their own, because they are not more infallible than the Arians.—Besides, according to the Protestant principle of private judgment, the Arians had an incontestible right of interpreting Scripture as they pleased ; and, therefore, the Protestants ought to condemn their own interpretations, or approve those of the Arians ; since both have the same right and the same authority. Men, if left to their own judgment, can turn and twist the Scripture as they please, and make it speak what they please. They have recourse to a Hebraism, to an ambiguous word, to a Greek or Syriac text which they understand not, or at *most* very imperfectly, and thus they make God speak in Scripture what he never meant. In fine, contrary to the design of God they make the Bible an inexhaustible abyss of disputes and contentions.

VII. The *seventh* mark of falsity in the sect is, that they all inveigh against the church established under the authority of the Roman Pontiff. In this particular the Lutherans and Calvinists have not only copied, but far surpassed, the ancient heretics. The horrible things which their patriarchs vomited against the ROMAN CHURCH excite disgust and indignation in the breasts of all honest Protestants.—So impious and immodest are many of their expressions, that, when we quote them, we are suspected of having invented them, in order to render their authors hateful. But how is it that those who are ashamed of the transports of their Doctors, do not quit their doctrine ? Could the Spirit of God, who is all peace, gentleness and love, animate such turbulent and even furious Apostles ? To be convinced of their outrageous fury and hatred against the Pope, we have only to read their writings. By what conduct had the Vicar of Jesus Christ provoked such injurious

jurious and cruel treatment? Foreseeing that their new and false doctrine would be condemned at his tribunal, they undertook to blacken and calumniate him to the people, to prevent the impression which his sentence would have naturally made on their minds —But in doing this they only followed the footsteps of all the ancient heretics who went before them.

VIII. The *eighth* mark of falsity in the sects is, their want of mission. The reformers never had any other authority to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, than that which they gave themselves, and which every person can assume as well as they. “*How can they preach unless they be sent?*” says St. Paul. (Rom. x. 15). There are two kinds of mission, extraordinary and ordinary. The *extraordinary* is, when God immediately sends men to declare his will, and authorizes them by the gift of miracles. Thus Moses was sent under the old law, and the Apostles under the new. The *ordinary* mission is, when God *mediately*, or by the hands of the already established pastors, ordains Bishops and priests to govern his flock. Luther and Calvin had not, certainly, an *ordinary mission*, since the church, instead of deputing them for the sacred ministry, excommunicated them as devouring wolves. It is also clear that they had not an *extraordinary mission*, since they had neither the gift of miracles, holiness of doctrine, nor sanctity of life, which always accompanied those who were extraordinarily raised up by God. They had therefore no other mission than all other heresiarchs had, that is, they sent themselves. No man can tell why Arius and Nestorius had not as lawful a mission as Luther, Calvin, or any of their followers. How deplorable then is the state of the protesting societies, being all absolutely destitute of pastors sent from God!

IX. The *ninth* mark of the falsity of the sects is, their separation from the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. Whoever will take the trouble of running through the history of past ages will see, that all Christians ever regarded as heretics those who separated themselves from the church which was governed by the Pope and the body of bishops. The Lutherans and Calvinists separated themselves from this church; they therefore merit the same title.

X. The *tenth* mark of falsity in all the sects is, their invisibility. When we ask the Arians, the Donatists, the Lutherans, Calvinists, &c. where their churches were before Arius, Donatus, Luther and Calvin had established their sects; they answer that they were invisible, and that they conserved the pure faith in the secret of their hearts until God’s time for declaring it was come. But on this principle every fanatic or impostor can establish a new religion; and, when asked where it was for ages before its appearance, he can say, as the existing sectaries do, that it was invisible until God’s time was come. Thus all may boast a direct descent from the
Apostle

Apostles, and he must be clear-sighted indeed who can discover them under their refuge of invisibility. ,

XI. The *eleventh* mark of falsity in the sects is, that they all went out of the Roman Church; whereas she has no other origin than Christ and his Apostles. If we mount up, we shall find her constantly existing under a line of pastors directly descending from St. Peter, as I have already proved.

XII. The *twelfth* mark of the falsity of the sects is, that the authors of them, though they all pretended to be immediately raised up by God, contradicted, calumniated, blackened and excommunicated each other. They could never agree in points which they believed to be *fundamental*. The injurious things which they vented against each other were shocking, and they seemed to be enraged that they could not find terms strong enough to express their mutual hatred. Their own partizans were ashamed of their excesses. It was to unite these jarring Apostles, and to hide from the people their difference of opinions, that so many conferences were held in Germany. Yet, after all, Luther and Zuinglius could never be reconciled. They remained obstinate, each determined to be the sovereign judge of Scripture, and to make others submit to their decisions. They were, each, resolved to have the glory of being the head of a party: they were tired of being disciples, and would be masters in their turn. Luther was extremely provoked that many of his disciples became patriarchs, and had their adherents as well as himself. All this is matter of public notoriety. Now I ask every sincere Protestant, whether he can seriously believe that God raised up, in an extraordinary manner, men who contradicted, blackened and excommunicated each other; whether he can think that God spake by Luther when he said, that Christ was *real'y present in the sacrament*; by Zuinglius, when he said, that Christ was *present only in figure*; and by Calvin, when he said, that Christ was *really present by faith*. Could God be the author of so many contradictions? No: those men spake according to their caprice, their interest their passions; and God permitted this strange contrariety of sentiment to show their fraud to the world. From these first reformers have sprung up the innumerable sects which are to this day spread throughout Great Britain and America; the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Anti-trinitarians, Arminians, Socinians, &c. &c. &c.—This monstrous diversity of religions resembles the confusion of Babel, where every one spoke a different language, without being able to understand each other. Though all these sects are so diametrically opposite to each other, yet, strange to tell! they all agree in one point, and in this *alone*, viz. to hate the Pope most heartily, and every thing that is connected with his religion. Whence this hatred to a church, in which

which they *generally* allow the possibility of salvation as well as in their own? the reason is, that she is constantly reproaching them with their desertion and apostacy from her. They fear a religion which commands obedience to ecclesiastical authority, a religion which enjoins mortification of the flesh by abstinence and fasting, confession of sins and doing penance for them.—In a word, our religion is too hard and difficult for them; they therefore form more commodious ones, and force the Scripture to authorize them.

XIII. The *thirteenth* mark of falsity in the sects is, that they would always be judges and parties in their own cause. Our adversaries cannot, with any propriety, retort this objection against us: because, in the *first place*, our church was always in possession of judging all controversies about religion, and no other origin of this authority can ever be pointed out, except Christ and his Apostles; and therefore it must have been derived from him. But whence had Luther, Calvin, &c. their authority? From themselves: and every individual has as much authority as they. We say, *secondly*, that our church is *only* the judge, and not a party. When Arius, Luther, &c. began to broach their novelties, several Doctors attacked them, and the dispute grew warm. In the mean while the church regarded the disputants on both sides as her children: but, when they could not settle their difference, they both appealed to her judgment, and pleaded at her tribunal. In these cases she was no more a party, than was the church at Jerusalem, when she decided the contest between the Christian and Judaizing teachers. The sentence was at last pronounced, and those who submitted to it were held as true believers, and the rebels were excommunicated as heretics. The universal church is not therefore judge and party. She raises no controversies herself, but only decides those which individuals raise. She is the *sovereign and infallible judge* established by Jesus Christ; and he orders, that all who “*will not hear her shall be regarded as heathens and publicans,*” that is, as out of the way of salvation. The Lutherans, &c. at first owned the church for the judge appointed by God, and clamoured loud for a general council; but they would have a council that should judge *according to the pure word of God*, that is, in plain English, that should judge in their favour, or else they were determined not to submit. In vain have they been told a thousand times: “The Bible is the subject of dispute; all plead it in their favour; it is a mute book, and says not, understand me in this sense or the other; and therefore a *living, speaking and infallible judge* is necessary to determine, in a sovereign manner, what is its genuine meaning.”—Without such a judge, (and it can be no other than the church established by

Christ) men may dispute about Scripture until the end of the world, without ever knowing what is its true sense.

XIV. The *fourteenth* mark of the falsity of the sects is, their speedy fall. Nothing better proves a religion to be false than its overthrow; because the true church of Christ must be immovable, invariable, and always visible until the end of ages. There were more than 200 different sects from Jesus Christ to Luther. They all called themselves *the true church*, and accused our's of error and prevarication. These sects, however, are *almost* all extinguished, and we know little of them but from history, which records their ruin as well as their rise. The sects of Luther and Calvin have made no progress since their first fury, but have always declined; and, without the gift of prophecy, we can foretell their certain ruin, because for many centuries all that have risen up against the Roman church have come to nothing, while she herself, like a rock, stands unshaken.

I have now proved that the Roman Catholic church *alone* has evident marks of the true religion of Jesus Christ, and that all the sects have as evident marks of falsity. The plain inference from the whole is, that we are obliged, if we have any regard for our salvation, to profess the first, and to abandon all the others. A Catholic in the day of judgment, can boldly address his judge in this manner: "O Lord, I have followed the religion which appeared to have the greatest marks of truth, and I have avoided all those which were marked with the seal of falsehood—If the Roman Catholic religion was false, why, O God, didst thou clothe it with so many visible marks of truth, with so many powerful and convincing motives of credibility? If since the fourth century she had fallen into error, (as her enemies asserted) why didst thou support her against such frequent and powerful attacks? Why didst thou always favour her with thy protection, while all the sects that accused her of error fell to ruin? Oughtest thou not to have crushed this church also, if it was not thine? Nevertheless, this is the *only one* which thou didst sustain without interruption: it is the *only one* that thou didst render perpetual, immovable, eternal. If a religion, so wonderful and so visibly protected by Heaven, was false, thou thyself, O God, didst spread a snare for thy creatures, and induce them into error." On the other hand, what can a sectary reply, when God shall ask him why he quitted, or did not embrace, the religion which he knew to have been always existing and triumphant, in which there appeared so many motives of credibility, and so many marks of his protection; to follow a new religion which was full of dissensions, variations, contradictions, and other marks of falsity? Will this man be able to excuse himself by saying, that his sect justified itself by texts of scripture? But God will show him that all heretics who at any time infested
his

his church, had the same plea, and that, consequently, he ought (if this were a good reason) to have embraced all their tenets. His Judge will then reproach him for following innovators who had no authority, in preference to the *universal church* which had subsisted invariably ever since the Apostles; for embracing a religion, which, under pretence of reformation, had retrenched all austerities, as fasts, abstinences, confession, penance, &c and, consequently, for having followed it from sensuality and a love of independence—and this will be his condemnation. May the all-merciful God avert this dreadful fate from every one of my dear countrymen.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

The following piece, in proof of the existence of a Purgatory, was written in answer to a query in the Essex Journal.

MR. PRINTER,

To satisfy your querist, I shall, in this paper, give you some of the Catholic arguments in favour of the doctrine of a purgatory. By purgatory we understand a third place distinct from heaven and hell, where temporary punishments are inflicted on those souls, who have not fully satisfied divine justice for their offences, and who, in consequence of their defilements, are unfit for the presence of God. In proof of the existence of such an intermediate state of suffering, I shall confine myself at present only to those texts of Scripture, which our Protestant brethren admit as canonical.

1. St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 15) makes mention of certain Christians who shall be "*saved as by fire*," that is, like persons that escape from the midst of a conflagration, who always suffer in their cloaths, in their hair, or in the parts of the body which are most exposed to the flames. But who are those Christians who shall be saved with such difficulty? They are those, says the Apostle, who, after having established Jesus Christ for their foundation, "*build on him, wood, hay, stubble*," that is, those who, though they believe in Christ, and are united to him by love, mix many imperfections and smaller sins with their good works—This sense appears natural. For here are persons who shall not be saved until they have suffered some pain. The whole difficulty is, to know whether this pain is to be endured in this life, or after death. The Apostle decides the question in the same passage: For after mentioning *one* who enriches his edifice with gold, silver and precious stones, and *another* who builds with wood, hay and stubble, he adds,—*The day of the Lord shall make known their works, and the fire shall try them. He whose works shall stand, shall be rewarded;*

and he whose work shall be burnt, shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Now it is clear, that *this day of the Lord* can be no other than that in which the Lord shall examine and judge every one's actions; which is certainly after death; therefore the pain here mentioned cannot be understood of the afflictions of this life; therefore the imperfect Christian must suffer some pain after death: Which pain will be *only* temporary, since, after having suffered it, he *shall be saved*. The text of St. Paul speaks then of a *temporary pain*, of a pain *suffered after death*, and by those who shall be *saved at last*—It consequently fully contains our idea of a purgatory.

2. The existence of a third place is no less solidly proved from the passage, (Matt. xii. 32) where it is said, that for him who sins against the Holy Ghost, there is no pardon in *this world nor in the world to come*. For to say, that there are some sins which will not be pardoned here nor hereafter, supposes that there are others which will be pardoned hereafter. Now, since Christ says, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven in this nor in the future life, it follows, that some sins are pardoned in the other world, though this particular one be excepted. But these sins are not certainly forgiven in hell, where there is no remission, nor in heaven, where nothing defiled can enter; consequently, there is a third place, where the remission of some sins may be obtained. If it be said that this expression of the Saviour signifies only, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven *throughout all eternity*—I answer, that a sin which will not be forgiven in this nor in the other world, will indeed never be pardoned throughout all eternity, and that a sin which will never be pardoned throughout all eternity, will not be pardoned in this nor in the other world. It will, however, by no means follow, that these two expressions are synonymous, or that they may be used indifferently on all occasions. When the Saviour was about to wash St. Peter's feet, that Apostle exclaimed, "*Lord you shall never wash my feet.*" This phrase is no way extraordinary; but if St. Peter had said, "*Lord, you shall not wash my feet in this world nor in the world to come,*" it would have been ridiculous. Why so? Because it would imply, that feet are washed in the future world.

3. A third text very proper to establish the reality of a purgatory, is that of St. Luke (xii. 59) where it is said—"*Thou shalt not go out thence* (that is, from the prison just before mentioned) *until thou pay the very last mite.*" The prison here mentioned cannot be a prison of this world where persons are confined for debt or crimes. For this threat of the Saviour could not be strictly true of an ordinary imprisonment, since men of old times can escape thence by address, or by powerful friends. Perhaps hell is the prison here spoken of? Hell, I own, is a real prison: but Christ speaks of a prison whence the

the criminal may be delivered after his debts are discharged. This cannot be hell, from which there is no redemption ; therefore it must be purgatory, whence we shall *indeed* be delivered, but not until after full satisfaction to divine justice. It may be objected, ~~that~~ that the word *until* (*DONEC*) does not always mark the term and end of the thing specified, but sometimes its continuation and perpetuity : for example, when it is said, that “ *Joseph knew not Mary until she had brought forth her son,*” it does not thence follow, that he knew her afterwards : And when God says to his Son, “ *Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool,*” it does not thence follow that Christ will cease to sit at his Father’s right hand after the subjection of his enemies ; and thus, when it is said, “ *Thou shalt not go out thence until thou pay the very last mite,*” it does not therefore follow that the prisoner shall ever come out. This objection, which, at first sight, appears formidable, is wholly in our favour. For, as from the expression : “ *Joseph knew her not until she had brought forth her son,*” we have a right to conclude, that Mary *certainly* brought forth her son ; and as from the words—“ *Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool, we conclude, that the time will infallibly arrive when Christ’s enemies shall be all put under his feet ;*” so from the phrase—“ *Thou shalt not go out thence, until thou pay the very last mite,*” we can as justly conclude, that the debts of the prisoner shall one day be *certainly* paid, and that then he shall go out.

4. St. John (Rev. xxi. 27) declares, that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven ; therefore, in order, to enter there, the soul must be exempt from every spot. Now *venial* sin is a spot ; for, though it does not destroy the friendship of God, it certainly displeases him, and consequently tarnishes the beauty of the soul. This spot, until it be effaced, is then an obstacle to the possession of God. Many *really* good Christians live and die sullied by these smaller sins. Nothing is more frequent with them (because they partake of human infirmity) than little impatiences, slight negligences in the service of God, sentiments of vain self-complacency, too free and hasty judgments of their neighbours, &c. “ *The just man,*” says Solomon, “ *shall fall seven (that is, many times ;*” And St. James adds, that “ *we all offend in many things.*” To pretend, that all these faults are *mortal*, and merit eternal damnation, is dishonourable and injurious to the divine goodness. To pretend, on the other hand, that these faults do not retard the future felicity of the soul, shews inattention to the express declaration, that nothing defiled can enter heaven

5. St. Peter (Acts ii. 24) says—“ *God raised up Jesus Christ, he having destroyed the pains of HELL.*” Now what pains of hell did the Redeemer destroy ? Not those surely which the damned endured ; for Jesus Christ, in his descent to hell, delivered none of the damned ; and it is an article of faith common to most Christians

Christians, that *their* pains will never cease. These pains must then be those which the just suffered for some remains of sin, that is, the pains of purgatory. The word *hell*, as all know, does not always mean in Scripture the abode of the damned, but sometimes signifies, *the whole lower invisible regions*. In this sense it is used in the Apostles' Creed, when it says that "*Jesus Christ descended into HELL*," that is, into the invisible world. I know that King James' translation, which renders the words of St. Peter according to the modern Greek, has the *pains of death* instead of the *pains of hell*. But the proof that this is a corruption is, that both the Greek and Latin Fathers quote the verse as it stands in our vulgate. Thus St. Polycarp, who lived in the Apostolic age, cites it in the beginning of his epistle.—St. Austin, who speaks of this text more than once, always supposes it as we now have it.—The Syriac version agrees with our's : For it says—Christ "*brake the bands of hell ;*" (SOLUTIS FUNIBUS INFERNI) and the words, "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,*" which St. Peter immediately after cites from the Prophet David, serve much to justify our translation. This text is then no feeble nor contemptible argument in favour of a purgatory.

6. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Phillippians, (ii. 10.) assures us, that "*at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*"—Now, who are those under the earth, that bend the knee at the name of Jesus ? Are they the devils or the damned souls ? But surely neither the one nor the other are much inclined to give marks of veneration to this adorable name. It is more natural to suppose that they tremble, shudder, and burst into blasphemies, at the thought of a name which, far from recalling the idea of an amiable Saviour, only presents that of a pitiless Judge. The good souls *only*, who are penetrated with gratitude for the benefit of redemption, can bless and respect this name, so far as to bend the knee, or give marks of veneration, at hearing it pronounced. These subterraneous places can then, be no other than purgatory.

These are the chief texts of Scripture which we adduce in favour of our belief on this head ; and these texts, we have the consolation to find, were understood in the same manner by the most illustrious Fathers and Doctors of the church. Of these I shall name the Saints, *Ambrose, Jerom, Gregory, Austin, Bernard, Cyprian, Bede* : to whom I will add Origen and Tertullian. Let it be here observed, that whenever I cite the Fathers, my intention is not to impose their opinions as articles of faith, but only to introduce them as the vouchers and witnesses of the public faith of their times ; and surely their universally allowed erudition and excellent virtue must have rendered them competent to relate what passed under their own observation.

JOHN THAYER, *Catholic Missionary.*

Mr.

MR. PRINTER,

YOU have lately published, under the signature of Mr. THAYER, scripture proofs of the doctrine of purgatory. I own that there appears some ingenuity in his reasonings upon the several texts which he adduces. But, Sir, I have a number of strong scripture-objections to make against this *popish* tenet, and which this zealous missionary must answer, if he ever expects to bring Americans to his faith.

My *first* objection is this : We read of only two sorts of persons in the holy Bible. To *the one* it will be said, " Take possession of the kingdom ;" to *the other*, " Go, ye cursed, into eternal fire." This evidently excludes a middle state.

My *second* objection is taken from the words of Solomon, (Eccles. xi. 3.) " If the tree fall toward the South, or toward the North ; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." This tree is surely the dying man ; and, therefore, when the man is dead, the soul is fixed, and shall for ever remain where it shall have been placed by the quality of its works.

My *third* objection is founded on the words of the prophet Ezekiel, (xviii. 22.) in which God declares, that he will no more remember the iniquities of the converted sinner. But does not a condemnation to purgatory prove that God remembers his crimes ?

My *fourth* objection is drawn from the declaration of St. John, (Rev. xv. 13.) " that they are blessed who die in the Lord : and that henceforth they rest from their labours." Hence it appears that all who die in the Lord (or in a state of grace) shall be happy *immediately* after death ; that they have nothing more to suffer, and consequently, that there is no purgatory.

My *fifth* objection is contained in St. Paul's words, (2. Cor. v. I.) " If our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." The Apostle here puts no interval between our quitting the *earthly* and our entering the *heavenly* mansion ; therefore we shall pass *immediately* from the one to the other ; therefore there is no purgatory.

My *sixth* objection is taken from Christ's promise of immediate heaven to the good thief. If any one ought to remain in purgatory, it should certainly be this great sinner, who was not converted until the hour of death, and who, consequently, had no time to expiate his crimes.

My *last* objection against the doctrine of purgatory is, that it appears injurious to that complete redemption which has been wrought out by the Saviour. Jesus Christ is said, in the Bible, to be our *propitiation and redemption*, and his blood purifies from all sin ; therefore

therefore to seek another redemption in the alms and prayers of the living, or in the sufferings of purgatory, looks like an insult on, and contempt of, the blood of the Redeemer.

These, Sir, are the difficulties that have occurred to me on this subject. I have waited some weeks, expecting that some abler hand would have written. If what I have set down will tend any way to the elucidation of the truth, I shall have gained my object.

A Sincere and unbiassed Reader of the Holy Bible.

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

MR. PRINTER,

I shall endeavour to answer the difficulties of your *unbiassed* correspondent with that spirit of candour and moderation with which they appear to have been dictated, being ever ready to satisfy those who ask a reason of the hope which is in me. I say, then, 1st. that the text : “ *Take possession of the kingdom ;—go, ye cursed, into eternal fire,*” is the final sentence of the general judgment, at which time there will *indeed* be but *two classes of men*, one destined for heaven and the other for hell ; and that purgatory will then cease, those who are there now detained being united to the heavenly band.—But that day is not yet arrived, and the state of things at present is very different from what it will then be. I would ask those who deny a middle state before the final judgment, where were reserved the souls of those who were raised from the grave by the Prophets under the old law, and by Jesus Christ and his Apostles under the new ? Were they detained in hell ? But all Protestants (a very few innovators excepted) will reply with us, that from thence there is no redemption. Were they in heaven ? But it could be no favour, but rather a punishment, to quit that delightful abode, to return to this mortal life.

2. If the tree mentioned (Eccles. xi. 3) really signifies the dying man, (as the objector asserts) Solomon probably means, that, at death, the soul is for ever fixed either a friend or an enemy of God, either in the number of the elect or of the reprobated ; that is, that its fate for eternity is decided, though it be not immediately received.—There is not the least absurdity in supposing that a final sentence may be pronounced, the execution of which may be deferred for a time. This takes place daily at the tribunals of this world. All Christians, I think, must own, that, before the resurrection of Christ, there was a *third* place which he sometimes calls *Abraham's bosom* and sometimes *paradise*. This bosom of Abraham or paradise could not be what we now call heaven, because
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the Apostles' Creed, which all admit, evidently insinuates that Christ did not ascend thither until after his resurrection. We believe, that, by the sin of Adam, heaven was shut against men until it was opened by Jesus Christ at his triumphant ascension, St. Paul assuring us that he entered heaven as "*the forerunner*." Now, if Jesus Christ was the first who entered heaven, (as the word forerunner implies) and if he did not enter thither until after his resurrection, as clearly appears from Scripture and the Creed, it follows that the holy souls of the old law must have been reserved in some *third* place until heaven was opened for them. This could not be hell, the pure souls of the Patriarchs and Prophets meriting better company than that of devils and damned souls.

On which side then did those holy souls fall? Was it to the South or to the North? Were they placed for ever, or only for a time? As the text of Solomon makes nothing against the being of a middle state before the coming of the Redeemer, how does it now prove any thing against a purgatory? This passage is therefore as difficult for a *real* Protestant to explain, as for a Catholic.

3. To the declaration of the Prophet Ezekiel, (xviii. 22) *that God will no more remember the iniquities of the true convert*, I might answer, that the sinner, who, according to the prescription of the same Prophet, does a penance proportioned to his crimes, who keeps all the commands and practices the works of justice and holiness, will so fully satisfy all his debts here as to have nothing to suffer in the other life. But I content myself with observing, that God's receiving a sinner into favour is truly to *forget* his crimes as to their principal effect, which is to render man an enemy of God and deserving of his hatred. Did not God truly pardon and (in the sense of Scripture) *forget* the adultery of David, on his sincere repentance? Yet he assures him, that his son, the fruit of his crime and whom he greatly loved, should in punishment be taken from him. Did not God pardon and *forget* the sin which the same king committed in numbering his subjects, contrary to God's will? Nevertheless, he chastised the royal penitent by the loss of 70,000 of his subjects; so true is it that God may be said to *forget* the sin of him whom he receives to favour, though he reserve for him some temporary pain.

4. St. John, it is said, assures immediate rest and happiness to those *who die in the Lord*. But who are those who are said to *die in the Lord*? The preceding verse shows them to be those who preserve their faith in Jesus Christ by suffering martyrdom; to be those pure and innocent souls who keep exactly the commandments of God. No Catholic ever doubted of the felicity of such souls immediately after death. But this concludes nothing in favour of less pure souls, whose spots have neither been effaced by penance nor by martyrdom. These must be purified by the pains of purgatory

gatory, before they can arrive at the clear vision of God. Again; when it is said, *they shall rest henceforth*, the word *henceforth* is not necessarily to be referred to the moment of death; but may as conveniently relate to the day of judgment, which is much spoken of in the chapter, and beyond which term the good cannot suffer—Or, the word *henceforth* (*amodo ápartí*) may mark the difference between the Christian and Jewish dispensation—As if St. John had said: “The Christians are more peculiarly happy than the Jews; for *now*, if men are careful to be perfectly pure before their death, they can be admitted to the immediate enjoyment of God: whereas, under the law, the holiest personages were obliged to wait the coming of the Redeemer.”

5. I do not see how St. Paul's assertion, (2 Cor. v. 1.) *that we enter an eternal house when we die*, disproves the existence of a purgatory; since he adds, as the express condition of an immediate admission there, “*if we be found clothed, not naked*,” that is, if we are so adorned with virtues and good works that divine justice can have no claim upon us. The Apostle's design, in this chapter, is to console the suffering Christians—For this purpose he tells them, that, in order to arrive at heavenly glory, the body must be dissolved, that they must bear this dissolution and whatever sufferings precede it with patience, and that they shall be amply indemnified for the whole by the habitation which is prepared for them in heaven. This morality is frequently inculcated from Catholic pulpits, and yet no one doubts of their believing a purgatory.

6. The objection drawn from our Saviour's promise of immediate happiness to the good thief, vanishes at the thought, that all was extraordinary in that great penitent. His courage to bear testimony in favour of oppressed innocence, his belief and generous confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ at the time when he was most cruelly insulted, his confidence in the power of a man whom he saw overwhelmed with torments, his patience in suffering his merited punishment, his humble and sincere acknowledgment of his guilt; all these were so many heroic acts of virtue: and it is not surprising, that, with God, they were accounted as a long penance, and were accepted by him in place of the temporal pains to which divine justice would have otherwise subjected the penitent, after pardoning his sins. I add, that this man, dying by the side of Christ, watered as it were, with his blood, received a more peculiar and copious application of this blood, and that this singular example cannot be alledged for the generality of Christians. I say further, that the prayer which he was inspired by God to pronounce: “*Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*,” marks that he believed he needed help in the other world, and that he hoped to obtain it from the Redeemer. This example, therefore, is rather in our favour, and serves to establish our doctrine.

7. The

7. The last objection, viz. that the doctrine of purgatory is injurious to the complete redemption of Jesus Christ, who is our propitiation and redemption, and whose blood cleanses from all sin, is the effect of ignorant or wilful misrepresentation. We, as well as our Protestant brethren, believe that no man could ever have satisfied either for the sin of Adam, or for his own sins; that all men and angels united could never atone for one *single* mortal sin; that none but a person of infinite dignity, such as Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, could ever offer to God a price sufficient for our offences; that the smallest of *his* actions was of infinite value; that a single drop of *his* blood could redeem not only this whole world, but, millions of others a thousand times more criminal than this: nevertheless, we believe, that, however superabundant be the satisfaction of Christ, it does not operate the *full* remission of our sins, unless it be *fully* applied to us. The damned experience not the effect of this satisfaction, though it be infinitely adequate to efface all their crimes. Why? Because it is not applied to them. A person, who is baptized in adult age, receives at that moment the remission of all sin, original, actual, mortal and venial, and the remission of all pain, temporal as well as eternal. For this he is indebted to the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, which through infinite mercy, is *fully* applied to him. This is not the case in the sacrament of penance. God, who is so gracious at baptism, is more difficult towards those who have violated their baptismal promises; he grants them a *less perfect* remission, changing the eternal pain which they deserved into a temporary one. To this he is in some measure forced by their ungrateful abuse of his goodness. The satisfaction of the saviour is ever equally infinite; but God will not apply it so fully to those who have shamefully lost their baptismal innocence: he is master to pardon under what conditions he pleases. It is just, and even salutary for us, that God, when he remits our sin, together with the eternal pain which is due to it, should impose some temporary pain, either in this world or in the world to come, in order to keep us to our duty, lest, being released too soon from the hands of justice, we should abuse his facility to pardon.

It is the blood of Christ, doubtless, which cleanses from all sin; for no sin could ever have been pardoned but in view of the Redeemer's merits. But every sin is not so perfectly pardoned that the sinner is dispensed from all obligation of penance. Now, if the sinner is wanting to this obligation which is annexed to his pardon, is it strange that divine justice reclaim its rights in the other life? and is this a derogation to the plenitude of Christ's redemption? By the meritorious satisfaction of Christ we are delivered from original sin, when we are regenerated by the water of baptism; this being the method ordained by God for applying

the blood of his Son to this effect. Nevertheless, we see and feel that we are not freed from all the sad consequences of this sin. We are subject to death and to many corporal and spiritual infirmities, which this sin has caused. Shall we for this reason think that any thing is wanting to the fullness of the Saviour's redemption? Heaven forbid. How many persons, after being reconciled to God, are still afflicted all their lives by sickness, losses and other adversities, and *that* in punishment for the sins of which they have obtained the pardon? Now, as these sorts of pain suffered in this life do not hinder us from believing Christ's redemption to be whole and entire, how can the temporary pains, endured in a future life, derogate from the plenitude of this redemption? We offer sacrifice and prayers for the deliverance of the souls that are suffering these pains. But what is the *sacrifice of mass* according to our belief, but Jesus Christ himself with all his merits and satisfaction, whom we present to God, for the souls in purgatory, as the price of their deliverance? and what are our prayers but an humble petition, that God would please to apply perfectly to those souls the satisfactions of his Son? To say that such a sacrifice and such prayers are an insult on the merits and satisfactions of the Redeemer, discovers *at least*, a great inattention to our doctrine, and in many, I fear, a determined resolution to calumniate and blacken us.

Thus have I endeavoured, according to my best ability, to remove every objection to our doctrine of purgatory. The impartial public must decide what has been my success.

JOHN THAYER, *Catholic Missionary.*

To the Man who styles himself CATHOLIC MISSIONARY,

FRIEND,

THOU art always writing or preaching in defence of thy religion. Thou art not content with doing this in the capital, but thou ramblest from state to state to propagate thy tenets. I cannot, *indeed*, suspect thy sincerity; because thy doctrine is so unpopular, and thou makest so few proselytes, that great courage seems requisite to support thee under so many discouraging circumstances, I would not blame thy zeal, if it were according to knowledge, which I fear is not the case.

Attend to a few remarks of a plain dispassionate man. I will not stab thee in the dark, by endeavouring to wound thy fame, as some, who call themselves teachers of righteousness, have done, hereby *tacitly* acknowledging that they are unable to answer thy main challenge, and to oppose argument to argument.

1st. In

1st. In the history of thine own conversion, and in thy controversy with Mr. LESLIE, thou talkest a great deal about *infallibility*; but I do not see that you settle the point, where this great prerogative resides.

2d. Thy church requires a blind, implicit belief of her doctrines. This to me doth not resemble the conduct of the Apostles, whose doctrine she pretends to maintain.

3d. Thou quotest as many texts in thy support as do our Protestant neighbours; but can we, unlearned, tell whether thou understand them right, since (as a writer somewhere says) "A long and laborious study, an accurate and extensive knowledge of profane history, a correct and intimate acquaintance with the original languages, is requisite" for this purpose?

4th. Thy church forbids to marry; and commands to abstain from meat. This conduct St. Paul calls "a doctrine of devils."—I Tim. iv. 3.

5th. It appears to me that thy Pope is clearly pointed out as the man of sin, in 2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.

6th. I am astonished, that, in the history of thy conversion, thou speakest of the miraculous cure of a Nun. Why, friend, miracles are ceased since the establishment of Christianity, and this age is too enlightened to believe such wonders.

7th. Is it not an argument against thy religion, that Deism prevails most in Catholic countries? Yet this is a notorious fact.

8th. I must think, that thy Pope will be shortly thrown down from his greatness, and his religion every where destroyed.—What the National Assembly has already done, affords us a happy prelude to this joyful event.

Thine in sincerity,

SIMPLEX.

P. S. If thou answerest in any rational way, I shall not reply; but if thine answer appears absurd, I will send thee a few lines more, provided the Printer will correct a little my grammar and spelling, which plainly discover that I am not much used to writing.

THE

THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARY'S REPLY TO SIMPLEX.

FRIEND,

I HAVE read your plain objections, and will answer them with plainness, in the order they stand.

1. You say, Sir, that I have not yet determined where resides that infallibility which we attribute to our church. But you must have read very superficially indeed, not to have seen this *point clearly settled*.—I said in both the writings you refer to, (and I now repeat it, lest the same objection should be ever made again) that “*the privilege of infallibility resides in the body of Bishops, whether assembled or dispersed, united to the visible head, the Pope.*”

2. You say, that the Apostles, whom we pretend to follow, did not, like our church, require a *blind, implicit belief of their doctrines*. I reply, in the first place, we do not require any more blindness of belief than all other professors of Christianity. We wish that every man's faith should be rational and enlightened; that he should be first fully convinced that God has established an infallible authority on earth, to which all are obliged to submit in matters of religion, and that then he should never call it in question any more than other Christians do those points which they believe divinely revealed. When once men are thoroughly convinced that infallibility is a revealed doctrine, it is not blindness, but the height of reason, to submit to it. Would not men be absurd and *blind* indeed, to believe that God has established for them an unerring guide, and commanded them to obey it, (and this is the faith of every Catholic) and then refuse to submit to it?—It is no *usurpation*, then, on the part of the church to *exact*, nor *blindness* on the part of the faithful to *pay*, an entire submission. Protestants may accuse us, if they please, of weakness for holding an infallibility which they think not well proved; but they can never call us *blind*, with any propriety, for submitting to an authority which we think the holy Scripture holds out as an article of divine revelation. As well might the Socinian accuse us of blindness for holding the divinity of our Saviour, which we take to be divinely revealed. But if, as you say, the Apostles did not require an implicit belief of their doctrines and submission to their orders, what then means their conduct after the decision of the council of Jerusalem?—They sent Paul, who, accompanied by Silas, “*went through Syria and Cilicia,*

licia, confirming the churches; *commanding* them to keep the precepts of the Apostles' and the ancients." (Acts xv. 41). What means that extraordinary sentence of St. Paul; (Gal. i. 8) "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema?" (or accursed) You must own, Sir, that the Roman church never required of her children a more implicit belief than this. If St. Paul had been a Protestant, he would, on the contrary, have advised the Galatians to examine any new doctrines which might be preached to them, and to receive *them* if *they* appeared better than his. So far is he from this, that he makes it a sufficient reason for rejecting them with contempt, if they varied in the least from what he had taught.

3. You acknowledge, my friend, that I cite as many Scripture texts in my support as my protesting neighbours; but the unlearned, you say, cannot tell whether I understand them right or not. This doubt, Sir, must for ever remain in the minds of those who admit no other interpreter of the Bible than their own judgment. But for us, who regard the sense which the church puts on the sacred books as infallible, we have no such doubts. That "a long and laborious study, an accurate and extensive knowledge of profane history, a correct and intimate acquaintance with the original languages, is requisite" to a complete understanding of the sacred volumes, I readily admit. But, whoever was the author of that passage, (for I know not) he admirably corroborates by it the necessity of a living authority to explain the Bible, since very few indeed possess all the qualifications, there marked out for so great a task.

4. You say, that St. Paul calls the prohibition to marry, and the command to abstain from meat *a doctrine of devils*. (1 Tim. iv. 3) Common sense, one would think, must suggest, that the Apostle speaks of something very different from the Catholic doctrine, which is, that, for greater mortification, it is sometimes good to abstain from those meats which most pamper the flesh; and that, from the same principle of self mortification, as well as for God's glory, and the greater advantage of men, it is good that a certain number of men and women should live unmarried. There is surely no Protestant, who, when popery is out of his mind and he forgets the interest of party will not readily allow the propriety of both these points. Common sense, then, and charity to the largest society of Christians on the globe, would incline every candid man to look out for some other application of the words of St. Paul. This application is easily and very naturally made (and in fact was always made by the Fathers of the church) to the Gnostics, Encratites, Marcionites, Manicheans, &c. who arose in or about the time of the Apostles. Those sectaries condemned marriage,

riage, flesh-meat, &c. as, *bad in themselves, and as proceeding from an evil principle*. This doctrine, which makes Satan the author of the visible creation, and of the marriage union, is *most certainly devilish*. But our church holds no such tenets. With us marriage is not only esteemed good and honourable, but is even a holy sacrament. Our church, indeed, judges that matrimony is incompatible with the faithful discharge of the duties of the priestly and monastic life, and therefore forbids any to embrace it, who do not find themselves able to submit to celibacy. Are there not likewise many employments in Protestant universities, colleges, families, &c. which cannot be filled by married persons? Would it be fair in us to conclude thence, that Protestants teach the *doctrine of devils*, by forbidding those persons to marry? No, surely; for they no more than we, compel any one to accept those offices for which a single life is a necessary condition. If certain more nourishing meats are forbidden on days of fasting and humiliation, this is not done from a belief that they are bad in themselves, (as is clear from our permission of the very same meats on other days) but by way of self denial and mortification. On those days it is not the meat, but the transgression of the precept, that defiles the conscience. No Christian will dispute, I presume, whether or not there may be sometimes wise reasons for prohibiting a *good* thing: since God himself forbade our first parents, as a test of their obedience, to eat of a certain fruit; since Moses forbade swine's flesh to the Jews; and the Apostles, "*blood and things strangled*," to their first converts. Yet all those things are *good*, in themselves, and to be used, at proper times, with thanksgiving. These observations, I think, plainly show, that the words of St. Paul are no way applicable to the Catholic church.

5. It appears to you, Sir, that our Pope is clearly pointed out in 2 Thess. ii. 3. 4.—But Grotius, Dr. Hammond and many other learned Protestants thought very differently, and even refuted and ridiculed this idea. I will here add a short passage from Doctor Heylin, (a most rigid Presbyterian) to show that he applied this text to the Grand Turk, instead of the Pope. "If," says he, "his sitting in the temple of God be an assured direction to find out the Anti-Christ, we may as well look for him in the temple of St. Sophia at Constantinople, which is now a Turkish mosque, as in St. Peter's church at Rome, which is still a Christian church."

In order to remove your unjust prejudices against the Pope, be pleased to weigh the following remarks:

1. *Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the opposer, (ὁ ἀντικείμενος)* is, according to all the ancients, to be *one particular man*, and not a succession of men. This is evident from the Apostle's frequent repetition of the Greek article, ο, which answers

swers to the English definite article, *the*. 2. He is to come a little before the general judgment. 3. He will not only deny the Saviour, but will pretend that himself is the Messiah, and will cause himself to be adored as God. Did any Pope ever usurp this sacrilegious honour? On the contrary, do they not call themselves the Vicars of Jesus Christ, pay adoration to him, and take the humble title of, "*servant of the servants of God*?" 4. Antichrist is to reign only three years and a half; is to kill two prophets: is to be received by the Jews as their deliverer; is to set a mark on the foreheads of his followers, &c. I believe, Sir, you would find it a task to apply all these, and several other particulars, which I could mention from Scripture, to the Pope, the man whom we venerate as the *visible* head of the Christian church.

6. You express an extraordinary astonishment, that, in the history of my conversion, I should mention any miraculous cures in this enlightened age. You add, that miracles have ceased since the establishment of Christianity. On this addition, I shall only remark, that I have frequently read and heard the same objection; but never knew any one attempt to prove it. As, then, it is advanced without proof, I shall take the liberty to deny it in the same manner. However, I defy any one to prove it from Scripture, which *alone*, you know, is the Protestants' rule of faith. You wonder that I should mention miracles in this *enlightened* age. I have nothing, Sir, to say against the age. On the contrary, I feel happy, that it is my lot to live at such an eventful period. I readily grant, that we know more than our forefathers in politics, natural philosophy, and in many of the useful arts of life. I will allow also, that there is a more general diffusion of knowledge than in former times. But are there now better poets, orators, painters, sculptors, musicians, &c. than in the days of the ancients? I leave it to the learned to discuss this question; for I do not mean to enter into any debate on such subjects, to which I profess myself totally unequal. But I have always understood, that the height of the ambition of modern artists is, to imitate, in some degree, the masterpieces of antiquity. It is for this purpose, that they crowd Rome, and other parts of Italy, where there are any fragments of the great masters. I am willing, however, to grant, that we moderns stand upon the heads of the ancients, who are but pigmies compared to us, and that our capacities are greater than theirs, in proportion to the distance that separates us from them. I grant all this, if you please, as to every thing but the science of religion. With respect to this, I should be glad to be informed what new discoveries have been made in modern times. I am sure, that the jarring opinions which distract the different sects of Dissenters, are all, with a very few exceptions, the renewal of old

errors, which have been exploded in some of the early ages of Christianity.

Now, let us come to the miracles. Facts, Sir, are facts, in an *enlightened*, as well as in an ignorant age; and the proof of facts, which we have not seen ourselves, is always the same, that is, human testimony—But, in an enlightened age, like our's, false miracles are with more difficulty imposed on the world, because of the facility of detection. Yet at this very time our church proposes to the public an infinity of miracles, and at *ROME*, the resort of the curious and inquisitive of all nations, Protestant and Catholic; *ROME*, where open and hardy discussion, even in frequented coffee-houses, is as free as in any other part of the world, (for this I appeal to all persons who have been upon the spot) and she defies the most scrutinizing critics to invalidate their truth. If such facts are not to be believed, there is an end to human faith, and, consequently, all history is sapped by the foundation. I had, Sir, as much evidence of the supernatural cure of the Nun I mentioned in my conversion, as I should require for any interesting event. Half the number of witnesses I examined, would be more than sufficient, in any court of justice, to deprive a criminal of his life. But every thing of a religious kind is suspected, if it comes from Catholics.—When we see Protestants refusing credit to accumulated human testimony on public and momentous facts, we are not surprised, that some of their own writers have undertaken to prove false all the miracles of the gospel. They are, *at least*, more consistent than their brethren. They reason thus:—“The Roman church boasts of miracles as great as those recorded in the gospel, and proves them by numerous competent witnesses. We reject these; therefore, to be consistent, we must also reject those of the gospel; which *equally* lean on human testimony.”

7. You urge, as an objection against my religion, that Deism prevails *most* in Catholic countries; and this, you say, is a notorious fact. On my side, Sir, I assert it, as a notorious fact, that Deism prevails *least* in Catholic countries. It is well known to every one, who is conversant in the writings of the French Deists, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, &c. that they have borrowed their strongest arms, and most plausible arguments, against Christianity, from the works of Shaftsbury, Hobbes, Chubb, &c. all British subjects. It is also as well known to every one, who has the least acquaintance with Europe, that France, which borders the nearest on England, is, of all Catholic countries, the most infected with deistical tenets.

8. When you speak of what the National Assembly has done to “*throw down the Pope from his greatness*,” you seem to be exceedingly rejoiced. MARTIN LUTHER also, in his day, exultingly

ingly predicted the fall of that dignified character, and was soon to see the accomplishment of his prediction. But, instead of falling, his empire increased; for while that apostate, with his adherents, was seducing the tepid and corrupted Catholics from their subjection to the holy See, zealous missionaries, in several parts of the world, especially in Japan, were converting the heathens by thousands. What happened then, is taking place now; for almost all Cochin-China, with the King at their head, has been lately added to the Roman church; and the bishops and priests who are now in China, though pretty numerous, are unable to satisfy the eagerness with which the inhabitants demand instruction in the doctrines of our church. Even in this land, thanks to our truly enlightened *general government*, which, in every quiet subject sees a useful member of society, let his religious profession be what it may, even here, from North to South, we have made the most rapid increase since the peace. All attempts to overthrow the Pope will be vain. For he presides over that church, against which Jesus Christ, truth itself, has declared, that "*the gates of hell shall never prevail.*" The Pope still retains over Catholics all that authority, with which they believe him invested by the Saviour of mankind. Temporal advantages are merely accidental, and increase or diminish according to the greater or less degree of affection borne to religion by Catholic princes. Should the Pope lose all his territories, and become a subject, as he once was, and as *most* other bishops now are, he would still be revered and obeyed as the *head of the church, the successor of St. Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ on earth.*

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

[Mr. THAYER begs that all printers, who may have inserted *Simplex* into their Gazettes, would be impartial enough to give a place to his reply; for if their papers are only to give one side of a question, they will be vehicles of prejudice, not of light and liberality.]

Mr. PRINTER,

THE two ecclesiastical champions, LESSLIE and THAYER, having began their engagement and entered on the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, and church of Rome, no doubt the doctrine of *transubstantiation* will next come on the carpet. If it should, the following, extracted from Lord KAIMES's Sketches on

Man, may be entertaining. It contains the Rules prescribed by the Church of Rome respecting the consecration of the host. In publishing it, you will gratify

A SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH.

MANY persons, proof against a serious argument, are sufficiently clear-sighted to discover falsehood when put in a ridiculous light. It requires, I am sensible, a very delicate hand to attack a grave subject with ridicule as a test of truth; and for that reason, I forbear to offer any thing of my own. But I will set before my readers some excerpts from a book of absolute authority with Roman Catholics. Though transubstantiation be there handled in the most serious manner, with all the ceremonies and punctilios that naturally flow from it, yet, to my taste, nothing can be contrived to give it a more ridiculous appearance. The book is the Roman Missal, from which the following is a literal translation.

“ Mass may be deficient in the matter, in the form, in the minister, or in the action. First, *in the matter*. If the bread be not of wheat, or if there be so great a mixture of other grain that it cannot be called wheat bread, or if any way corrupted, it does not make a sacrament. If it be made with rose-water, or any other distilled water, it is doubtful whether it make a sacrament or not. Though corruption have begun, or though it be leavened, it makes a sacrament, but the celebrator sins grievously.

“ If the celebrator, before consecration, observe that the host is corrupted, or is not of wheat, he must take another host: if after consecration, he must still take another and swallow it, after which he must also swallow the first, or give it to another, or preserve it in some place with reverence. But if he have swallowed the first before observing its defects, he must nevertheless swallow also the perfect host; because the precept about the perfection of the sacrament, is of greater weight than that of taking it fasting.— If the consecrated host disappear by an accident, as by wind, by a miracle, or by some animal, another must be consecrated.

“ If the wine be quite sour or putrid, or made of unripe grapes, or be mixed with so much water as to spoil the wine, it is no sacrament. If the wine have begun to sour or to be corrupted, or be quite new, or not mixed with water, or mixed with rose-water or other distilled water, it makes a sacrament, but the celebrator sins grievously.

If

" If the priest, before consecration, observe that the materials are not proper, he must stop, if proper materials cannot be got; but after consecration, he must proceed, to avoid giving scandal. If proper materials can be procured by waiting, he must wait for them, that the sacrifice may not remain imperfect.

" Second, *in form*. If any of the words of consecration be omitted, or any of them be changed into words of a different meaning, it is no sacrament; if they be changed into words of the same meaning, it makes a sacrament, but the celebrator sins grievously.

" Third, *in the minister*. If he does not intend to make a sacrament, but to cheat; if there be any part of the wine, or any wafer that he has not in his eye, and does not intend to consecrate; if he have before him eleven wafers, and intends to consecrate only ten, not determining what ten he intends: in these cases the consecration does not hold because intention is requisite. If he think there are ten only, and intends to consecrate all before him, they are all consecrated; therefore priests ought always to have such intention. If the priest, thinking he has but one wafer, shall, after the consecration, find two sticking together, he must take them both. And he must take off all the remains of the consecrated matter; for they all belong to the same sacrifice. If in consecrating, the intention be not actual by wandering of mind, but virtual in approaching the altar, it makes a sacrament: though priests should be careful to have intention both virtual and actual.

" Besides intention, the priest may be deficient in disposition of mind. If he be suspended, or degraded, or excommunicated, or under mortal sin, he makes a sacrament, but sins grievously. He may be deficient also in disposition of body. If he have not fasted from midnight, if he have tasted water, or any other drink or meat, even in the way of medicine, he cannot celebrate nor communicate. If he have taken meat or drink before midnight, even though he have not slept nor digested it, he does not sin. But on account of the perturbation of mind, which bars devotion, it is prudent to refrain.

" If any remains of meat, sticking in the mouth, be swallowed with the host, they do not prevent communicating, * provided they be swallowed, not as meat, but as spittle. The same is to be said, if in washing the mouth, a drop of water be swallowed, provided it be against our will.

" Fourth, *in the action*. If any requisite be wanting, it is no sacrament for example, if it be celebrated out of holy ground, or upon an altar not consecrated, or not covered with three napkins;

* The original word, here translated *provided*, is *cum*: which should be rendered *since*. This inaccuracy is committed by Lord Ka'm-s, to make us say that it depends on the priest's intention to swallow meat *as meat*, or only *as spittle*.

if there be no wax candles ; if it be not celebrated between day-break and noon ; if the celebrator have not said *mattins* with *lauds* ; if he omit any of the sacerdotal robes ; if these robes and the napkins be not blessed by a bishop ; if there be no clerk present to serve, or one who ought not to serve, a woman for example ; if there be no chalice, the cup of which is gold, or silver, or pewter ; if the vestment be not of clean linen adorned with silk in the middle, and blessed by a bishop ; if the priest celebrate with his head covered ; if there be no missal present, though he have it by heart.

“ If a gnat or spider fall into the cup after consecration, the priest must swallow it with the blood, if he can : otherwise, let him take it out, wash it with wine, burn it, and throw it with the washings into holy ground. If poison fall into the cup, the blood must be poured on tow or on a linen cloth, remain until it be dry, then be burnt, and the ashes be thrown upon holy ground. If the host be poisoned, it must be kept in a tabernacle until it be corrupted.

“ If the blood freeze in winter, put warm cloths about the cup : if that be not sufficient, the cup in boiling water.

“ If any of Christ’s blood fall on the ground by negligence, it must be licked up with the tongue, and the place scraped : the scrapings must be burnt, and the ashes buried in holy ground.

“ If the priest vomit the eucharist, and the species appear entire, it must be licked up most reverently. If a nausea prevent that to be done, it must be kept until it be corrupted. If the species do not appear let the vomit be burnt, and the ashes thrown upon holy ground.”

MR. PRINTER,

I HOPE you will be so just as to permit me to make a short answer to the “ *Searcher after Truth*,” through the medium of your paper, that thus the defence may be as public as the attack. I see nothing *ridiculous* in the RUBRIC (or directions) which that writer quotes from our Missal ; for it contains what Christians of all denominations, I presume, believe, viz. That Christ instituted the sacrament in wheaten bread and in the juice of the grape ; that the minister of it should use the words of consecration or benediction, which were ordained by the Saviour, or at least the sense of those words ; and that he should act in a human manner, or with an intention of really doing what he performs. The RUBRIC enjoins on the priest an extreme exactitude in the *matter, form and intention*, the want of either of which is termed so essential a defect as prevents the reality of the sacrament. Afterwards

wards it proceeds to point out some other defects, which, though they do not hinder the being of the sacrament, yet are always sinful, when wilfully committed. These defects are, the not consecrating in a decent place set apart for that purpose, and the rest as enumerated by Lord Kaimes. But the *Rubric* does not say (as he would have it) that, if these things be wanting, there is no sacrament; but *only* that their omission is a sin. Why so? Because the priest thereby disobeys the church in what she orders as decent and respectful in the worship of God. If Lord Kaimes had read the Missal, he was ignorant of the plainest Latin; or else he wilfully misrepresented our church in order to render her ridiculous.

JOHN THAYER, *Catholic Missionary.*

MR. PRINTER,

I READ, with some attention, Mr. THAYER's observations on Lord KAIMES's quotation from the Romish Missal, and do not find that he objects to the truth of it, except that he observes, that the *Rubric* does not say, as Lord Kaimes would have it, that in case of certain things being wanting, there is no sacrament, but *only* that their omission is a sin. Mr. Thayer goes on to observe, that if Lord Kaimes had read the Missal, he was either "ignorant of the plainest Latin, or wilfully misrepresented their church, in order to render it ridiculous."—To which I would answer, that the classical learning, as well as the candour of Lord Kaimes, is so universally acknowledged, that unless Mr. Thayer produce the Latin of his Roman Missal, and point out the error, the public will not be much disposed to believe his bare assertion.

Mr. Thayer observes that he sees nothing ridiculous in the rules of his church, as quoted by Lord Kaimes. This may be; but to me, I must own they appear not only ridiculous, but also absurd and indelicate in the highest degree, as well as deficient according to their system. To be particular:

What more ridiculous than the following articles, viz.—"If any remains of meat sticking in the mouth be swallowed with the host, they do not prevent communicating; *provided they be swallowed not as meat, but as a little.*"—The same is to be said, if in washing the mouth a drop of water be swallowed, *provided it be against our will.*

What more absurd than confining the sacrament to *wheat* bread, which in many places is not to be had.

What

What more absurd than burning candles at noon day.

What more absurd than to declare the sacrament to be imperfect, unless the vestment of the priest be of clean linen, and yet admit it to be perfect, though the priest himself be ever so impure in his morals, and even excommunicated.

What more indelicate than to order the priest, in case a spider fall into the cup, to swallow it—and, in case of a nausea he should vomit up the host, *reverently* to lick it up again.

Or what more deficient than, after making such careful provision, in case the host should escape *one way*, to leave the other unguarded.

A SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH.

MR. PRINTER,

HOWEVER high Lord KAIMES may stand in the public mind for "*classical learning and candour*," he has certainly, either from ignorance or malice, misrepresented the sense of the *Rubric* at the head of the Roman Missal. That every reader may judge of the truth of my assertion, I shall set down the original words, at the same time offering to gratify any person with the inspection of the book itself. The *Rubric* runs thus: "Quidquid horum deficit, scilicet *materia* debita, *forma* cum *intentione*, non conficitur sacramentum. Et his existentibus, QUIBUSCUMQUE ALIIS DEFICIENTIBUS, VERITAS ADEST SACRAMENTI." Can words more plainly declare that, provided the due *matter*, *form* and *intention* exist, no defect can prevent the reality of the sacrament? Among the non-essential defects, or those which do not hinder the truth of the sacrament (*veritas sacramenti*) the *Rubric* particularizes the excommunication, suspension, degradation and sinful state of the priest, his having broken his fast since midnight, his not using proper vestments, his not celebrating in a decent place set apart for that purpose, &c. but expressly adds, that the priest "conficit quidem sacramentum, sed gravissimè peccat, propter communionem quam indignè sumit." The ridiculous absurdity, which *the Searcher after Truth* finds in our rules, is, in one instance, as imputable to the Protestants as to us, and, in another, arises wholly out of the misrepresentation of Lord Kaimes. For the rest, who can wonder that *the Searcher after Truth* finds something indelicate in our *Rubric*, since he discovers such exquisite delicacy in the last sentence of his remarks?

JOHN THAYER, *Catholic Missionary.*

The

The following extract, from Mr. JOHN GARDNER's Defence of the Theatre, appeared in a public Gazette, with a promise of other passages, *out of the same work*, equally satirical on our "superstitions." I attacked this extract, and the other passages were never printed.

[N. B. Mr. GARDNER is a celebrated Lawyer, and a great speaker in our House of Representatives.]

ALL *false religions* have abounded with ridiculous superstitions and unintelligible mysteries, and to the unintelligibilities (the more monstrously absurd the more credible!) the multitude have, generally, appeared to be the most zealously attached. Would to God the *true religion* had never been corrupted by the unfathomable, dark unintelligibilities of selfish, designing, crafty, knavish priests; but their motto was, *hoc facit pro nobis*—"grist to our mill." Even the holy, lying Father, Saint Jerom,* or the impenetrable Saint Austin, (I do not now recollect which) has, seriously, told us, *credo quia impossibile est*—"I believe it, because I know it to be impossible." What dreadful, unintelligible fables have not the *ecclesiastic descendants* of the ancient Romans introduced into the purest system of religion the world ever knew? Witness, among other of their unintelligible nonsense, *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, the *worship* of pretended *Saints*, pretended miracles wrought by the *bones*,† &c. of many a canonized villain, &c. &c. &c. The true religion is a plain, intelligible rule of right, no ways contradictory to *reason*, and consists of two plain, intelligible rules of conduct, teaching man his duty to God and his duty to his neighbour. ‡

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ANSWER

* This lying *Father* says, the Lord sent two angels to give him a sound whipping for mispending his time, in reading *Virgil* and *Cicero*.

† Witness one of my own native townsmen and countrymen, who is now a *Catholic Priest*, among us, and who was converted to the *true faith* by the miracle-working bones of the blessed *St. Benedict de Labre*, at Rome.

‡ "What doth the Lord require of thee, O man, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Micah*. vi. 8.

The divine teacher, after *Moses*, hath said, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*"—What more, the *Pope*, the *Devil*, or the whole *Hoci Puci*, or conjurers of *high church*, may say, I regard not.

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

MR. PRINTER,

NO man in this State pays a readier homage to the distinguished abilities and profound erudition of JOHN GARDNER, Esq. than myself; but with all due deference to so exalted a character, I shall take the liberty to say, that his sarcastic remarks on "*the ecclesiastic descendants of the ancient Romans*," are not solid arguments. The epithets he bestows on the Saints, *Jerom* and *Austin*, are *harsh* and *improper*. Supposing that St. *Jerom* was not scourged by angels for his too great fondness for the works of *Cicero*, does it follow that he is a liar? Charity would rather term him *weak*, for taking his imagination, or the illusion of a dream, for a reality. The epithet *lying* is then *harsh*, to say the least. That of impenetrable, applied to St. *Austin*, is highly improper; for if any writer ever had the happy talent of adapting himself to the most ignorant, it was this truly great man. No person who reads his *City of God*, for instance, can pronounce him an *impenetrable* author. It was, I suppose, for the sake of distributing his epithets, and of telling the pretty anecdote of the angelic whipping, that Mr. GARDNER has introduced the Saints *Jerom* and *Austin*; for a man of his extensive reading must have known that the words, "*credo, quia impossibile est*," are not contained in either of those Fathers. They were written by TERTULLIAN, a man who, though once a pillar and champion of our church, died out of her pale; and whose expressions we are, consequently, not obliged to defend: I shall attempt, however, to put a favourable sense on his words. This author is remarkable for sententious and apparently paradoxical modes of speech; under which is commonly couched some important truth. Of this nature is the phrase, "*I believe, because it is impossible*." In which he leaves it to the judgment of the reader to supply, "*that human wisdom could be its author*." The phrase completed then is, "*I believe the Christian religion, because it is impossible that human wisdom could produce so sublime a system*." I have not this author by me, but I remember that when I read him, the context inclined me *necessarily* to this interpretation; and indeed, without some such supplement, we must accuse TERTULLIAN of the most signal nonsense; which Protestants, themselves, will not allow, since they, as well as we, regard him as one of the ablest apologists for Christianity. In the phrase, thus naturally explained, I see nothing but what every Christian can, and frequently does, say. What more common,

mon, than to hear, from Protestant, as well as Catholic pulpits, the sublime incomprehensibility of some of the doctrines of Christianity adduced as a reason to prove the divinity of this religion? I will go further and say, that I see not why a sensible Deist, who, struck with admiration on examining into his own formation, or into the works of nature, might not use a similar phrase.—“*I believe*, would he say, *there is some great first cause, because it is impossible*” that such stupendous works should be the production of chance, or of any human being.

All those *elegant and p lite* squibs and sarcasms, against the Catholic religion, with which the public papers are so replete, excite in me no other emotions than those of pity or contempt; for which reason I take no public notice of them. But Mr. GARDNER has pointedly levelled his shafts at me, as appears from his note, in which he imputes my conversion to the *miracle-working bones of BENEDICT J. LABRE*, though I never asserted any such thing.—Ridicule is not always the test of truth, and sneers are beneath so great a man as Mr. G. especially when attacking the religion of the greater part of the civilized world. I now call on Mr. G. in the face of the world, to step forth and prove, by calm and solid reasoning, that the doctrines of *transubstantiation, purgatory, worship of Saints and Relics, &c.* which he is pleased to style *unintelligible nonsense*, have been superadded to primitive Christianity by “*selfish, designing, crafty, and lying priests*”; or by any others. This illustrious warrior will not think himself degraded by entering the lists with me, since he is the aggressor.—Though conscious of talents and learning far inferior to his, of being a mere dwarf in comparison of this mighty giant; yet, having truth on my side, I fear not the engagement.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

MR. GARDNER'S ANSWER.

Mr. PRINTER,

THE challenge of entering the field of combat, during the present summer, with that young stripling *David*, of *holy church*, the Rev. *John Thayer*, which that novel *Catholic Missionary* has so boldly and publicly offered to the *Philistine Goliath*, alias the *Eastern Sachem*, alias *J. G.* in the last Gazette, for many reasons,

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cannot be accepted. WE* will mention *two* only for the present. First.—Some important business in the Supreme Judicial Court, which will soon sit in the county of *Lincoln*, will necessarily command our presence in that part of the State. The other, and most conclusive, is, that to attempt to *reason* on such subjects as *transubstantiation, purgatory, worship of Saints and Relics, &c.* which HIS HOLINESS, *Pope Thayer*, observes, “we have been *pleased to style* unintelligible nonsense,” and of course much above, or rather clearly repugnant to all *human reason*, would be an idle, fanatical waste of time; for, by *reasoning*, we ought to expect to convince, but that will be found impossible, as the *superstitious* laugh at, and turn their backs upon *human reason*: For according to the admirable MONTESQUIEU,† “the *prejudices of superstition* are superior to all other prejudices, and *its reasons* to all other reasons.” Such a contest, therefore, between our friend, *Ablé Thayer*, and J. G. would probably produce no greater present good, than the public dispute, of old, in the days of popish Queen *Mary*, between the *Roman Catholics* and the *Protestants*, then produced.

Soon after that superstitious, bloody bigot had ascended the throne of England, a convocation of the *Clergy* was held, when the *Roman Catholics*, after the manner of our Rev. friend, *Pope Thayer*, boldly challenged the *Protestant Communion* to dispute concerning the points controverted between the two sects; and, as *transubstantiation* was the article, of all others, which the *Romanists* deemed the *clearest*, and founded upon the most irresistible argument, they chose to try their strength by defending it. “The *Protestants*,” (says Mr. *Hume*, in his *History of England*) “pursued the dispute as far as the clamour and noise of their antagonists would permit; and they fondly imagined, that they had obtained some advantage, when, in the course of the debate, they obliged the *Catholics* to avow, that, according to their doctrine, *Christ* had in his last supper, held himself in his hand, and had eat and swallowed himself. This triumph, however, was confined to their own party; the *Romanists* maintained, that their champions had, clearly, the better of the day; that their adversaries were blind and obstinate *heretics*; that nothing but the most extreme depravity of heart could induce men to contest such self-evident principles; and that the severest punishments were due to their perverse wickedness.” Such was the result of that famous, public dispute; and similar, most probably, would be the event of the contest to which we are so boldly challenged by our Rev. friend.

Whether

* In imitation of the meek and humble successors of the Fishermen of *Galilee*, although we have no pigs in our belly, choose modestly to speak in the plural number.

† *Spirit of Laws*.—Book xviii. Chap. 18.

Whether the epithets we bestowed on the *Saints Jerom* and *Austin* be improper, or not, let all men of common sense determine. We are not used, nor do we mean, to abuse language, to call good evil, or evil good; we cannot, therefore, call an oyster an orange; but if a silly or an impudent fellow will publish a notorious falsity to the world, we will speak the truth, and say, he is a liar, although mother church may admit him to be a Saint; and, therefore, when *Jerom* has the foolish impudence to say, the Lord sent two Angels to whip his — for studying *Cicero* or *Virgil*, the voice of truth compels us to say, he lies.* As to *Austin*, the Monk, who, in his *City of God*, expresses somewhat of a doubt whether *Apuleius* could be changed into an ass, and yet retain the faculties of his human soul, we think he therein discovers an head-piece truly impenetrable to every ray of reason and common sense, although he be now a canonized Saint of the holy, Catholic apostolic Church.† “*Credo quia impossibile est.*”—I believe it, because it is impossible. Whether it belong to the lying *St. Jerom*, the impenetrable *St. Austin*, or the ridiculous retailer of nonsensical falsehoods, *Tertullian*, is not quite so material as our friend *Thayer* would wish us to suppose; and, notwithstanding his *Jesuitisms* to make it intelligible, the same remains, and will continue to be,

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* An anonymous writer of the second century says, that *Natalis*, a Confessor, having accepted of a bishopric among the heretics was severely scourged, all night, by Angels, and the next morning repented and returned to the church! *Apud* Euseb. v. 28. The testimony of this unknown writer cannot be of great authority:—But the story seems to have given the hint to *Jerom* to feign that he also underwent the same discipline for studying profane authors, *Cicero*, *Virgil*, &c. Upon which one of the *Ciceronians* hath observed, that if *Jerom* was whipped for being a *Ciceronian*, that is, for writing altogether in the style and manner of *Cicero*, he suffered what he did not deserve, and might have pleaded “*Not Guilty.*”—*JORTIN'S Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* — Book ii. Part 2.

† *Augustin* seems to have had a small doubt whether *Apuleius* was really transmorphied into an ass. If he had lived in the days of *Apuleius*, and had said so, the philosopher would have returned the compliment upon him. *Apuleius in Libris, quos Asini aurei titulo inscripsit, sibi ipsi accedissee, ut accepto veneno, humano animo permanente, asinus fieret, aut indicavit aut finxit. Hec vel falsa sunt, vel tam inusitata, ut merito non credantur.* De Civ. Dei, xviii. 18. But in the time of *Augustin* some Christian Miracles were related by himself, and received by the populace, which for improbability were not at all inferior to the transformation of *Apuleius*.—*JORTIN'S Remarks, Book ii. Part 1.*

"most signal nonsense," to the end of time. The first time we met with this benighted declaration, was when we were a Student in the *logical* class, at the University of *Glasgow* ; We there met with it, in reading "*Locke upon the Human Understanding*," who does not quote the author from whom he takes it upon examination.* We now agree with our friend the *Abbé Thayer*, however, that it is a saying of that great and incomprehensible *Father*, though no canonized *Saint Tertullian*.† As to the miracle-working bones of *St. Benedict J. Labre*, what hand they had in the conversion of our friend *Thayer*, let his own account, printed in *London*, in 1788, declare.

[Here follows a long quotation from the history of *Mr. Thayer's* conversion ; which it is useless to publish, as the book is very much known.]

If we have misquoted or left out any thing material, His HOLINESS, friend *Thayer*, can put us right ; but we meant to quote truly so much as we thought necessary. After all this, our Reverend friend may doze on, for life, with his dreamer, the lying *St. Jerom*, his clear-headed, great an, *St. Austin*, with his heretical pillar or champion, *Tertullian*, or with any other of the silly, superstitious, credulous *Fathers* of holy church, whose curious head-pieces, in general, are full proof against mathematical truth, and the clearest demonstrations of human reason. But if he would wish for an accurate knowledge of an almost infinite multitude of miracles, as conclusive to the full as those performed by the relics of the very filthy though venerable *Labre*, he is recommended to peruse with attention "*The Bishop of Exeter* (the late Doctor *Lavington's* *Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists compared*," published about forty years ago.

BAREBONES.
MR,

* We attempted to wade through the mud of the *Fathers*, and to run into the dunghill of *Cotton Mather's Magnalia*, few years since, but were soon worn down with fatigue. The former are in the Library of the *Stone Chapel Boston*, and both in the *College Library*.

* *Tertullian* had no small share of credulity : he proves that the soul is corporeal, from the visions of an illuminated sister, who told him that she had seen a soul. *De Anima*, p. 311. He affirms roundly, *constat*, says he, *Ethnicis quoque testibus*, that a fine city was seen, for forty days, suspended in the air, over *Jerusalem*. This report of some crazy pilgrim or idle stroller, he adopted, as a proof that the millennium was at hand.—*Contra Marc.* iii. 24. How can any one depend upon his testimony in things which are of the preternatural and miraculous kind ?—*Ibid.*

MR. THAYER'S ANSWER.

MR. PRINTER,

WHEN men of sense and learning substitute vain and indecent declamation in place of solid reasoning, they give strong suspicions that their cause is bad ; for, if they were furnished with good arguments in its defence, they would produce them. The piece signed "*Barebones*," in the last gazette, being of the above description, should have passed unnoticed by me, had not Mr. GARDNER owned it for his before a very respectable company.—It is with this gentleman that I am engaged, and it is of him, by name, that I shall speak, never calling him *Holiness*, *Pope*, *Sachem*, or *Barebones*.—In a word, I shall treat him with truly *popish* deference, moderation and politeness.

I said, the epithet bestowed by Mr. G. on *St. Jerom*, was rather *harsh*, because, if we did not choose to believe what he relates, we might plead in his excuse, the force of imagination or the illusion of a dream. To this we should certainly incline, if we were animated by true Christian charity, which, whenever any conduct of our neighbour can bear two constructions, obliges us to the mildest and most favourable. This remark may be as well applied to the words of *Tertullian*, as to the story of *St. Jerom* ; for we ought no more to accuse a sensible man of absurdity, than an apparently good man of evil intentions. Mr. G. chooses to act otherwise, and persists in calling *St. Jerom* a liar and *Tertullian* nonsensical.

I asserted that *St. Austin* could not be styled an impenetrable author, because he had the happy talent of adapting himself to the meanest capacities. And how does Mr. G. disprove my assertion ? By saying, that the Saint doubted of (he should have rather said, flatly denied*) the wonderful change of *Apuleius* into an ass, and therefore "*his head-piece is impenetrable to every ray of reason and common sense ?*" I dare affirm, that Mr. G. joins with the Saint in denying the same transformation.—Would he have us believe, that his own "*head-piece is impenetrable to every ray of reason and common sense ?*" The reader here plainly perceives that Mr. G. does not prove any thing against *St. Austin*, which does not equally make against himself, but that he totally changes the point in dispute. The question is, whether *St. Austin* may be properly termed an impenetrable, i. e. an unintelligible author. That he is not, I appeal to

* *St. Austin's words, as cited by Mr. G. are, Hac vel falsa sunt, vel tam inusitata, ut meritò non credantur.*

to the perspicuity of his writings. Mr. G. in opposition asserts that his *head-piece is impenetrable, &c.* But this is making him a stupid dunce. Mr. G. will find that stupidity will with much more difficulty be believed of *St. Austin*, than the profoundest *unintelligibility*. This great man has ever been, and is still, the admiration of all christians, as well Protestant as Catholic; and his writings, the greatest efforts of human genius, will give the most useful lessons to mankind, when those of all his paltry defamers shall be totally forgotten. While I am speaking of *St. Austin*, I will observe that Mr. G. confounds him with *Austin* (or, as he is commonly called, *Augustine*) the *Monk*—But they are two personages entirely distinct, the one lived in the 5th, and the other in the 6th century—The *first* was a bishop in *Africa*, and a great doctor of the church; the *second* was the zealous missionary who converted our English ancestors to the Catholic faith in the reign of King **ETHELBERT**.

I said that *sneers are not to be used in attacking the religion of the greatest part of the civilized world*—Mr. G. still continues his sneers, and takes no notice of this observation, though approved of by decency and common sense: For, however high he may rate his own goodness and abilities, he must in modesty grant, that as great and good men as himself have believed, and still believe, the dogmas of *transubstantiation, &c.* I put myself entirely out of the question, because I am guilty of several of those abominable crimes, which not only exclude me from all claims to virtue, but even to the very first "*rays of reason.*"—My *first* sin is *popery*, and such genuine popery, that I believe *transubstantiation*, and every other article of the popish creed, as firmly as I do mine own existence, and *this* for one simple reason (which Mr. G. will call a very foolish one) because God has revealed it—My *next* offence, which greatly heightens the former, is, that I am a popish Priest—*Thirdly*, O horror upon horror! I was converted to this faith from the pure, primitive, dissenting church of America—And, *fourthly*, which is the sum total of all folly and iniquity, I am zealous for my religion, and endeavour, by the lawful means of fair argument, both from the pulpit and the press, to persuade others to embrace what I myself think the *only sure road* to eternal felicity.—All these multiplied transgressions absolutely shut me out from all pretensions to goodness and common sense—I dare however say, Mr. G. will allow that **ALFRED the Great** (the only man, as far as I can recollect, whom all historians call an unblemished character) had some small share of virtue and reason.—He will also grant the same grace to our famous **DRYDEN** and **POPE**. Perhaps he will extend his liberality even to the Popes **LAMBERTINI** and **GANGANELLI**, to the Cardinals **RICHLIEU** and **MAZAZIN**, to the Bishops **BOSSUET** and **FENELON**, and to some few other names which I could mention,

tion, and for which the *benighted* Europeans still express a foolish veneration—Yet all those hitherto illustrious men professed to believe, and many of them wrote to defend the “*unintelligible nonsense*” of *transubstantiation*, &c. Though Mr. G. should assert that they could not be such fools,* it is not less true for that; for we ought never to suppose men hypocrites without good proofs.

To what purpose has Mr. GARDNER quoted so many pages from the history of my conversion? Is there one word in the whole about the *bones* of Benedict J. LABRE? Does he suppose that when a person with us dies in such a reputation of virtue as inspires us with a confidence in his intercession, we dissect him to take out his bones? The body of B. J. LABRE was buried whole and entire, as far as I know; for I never heard the contrary. From the passage of my book, as quoted by Mr. G. it only follows, that, after I had, for a considerable time, seriously sought the truth, both in books and conversation, I was quickened in my inquiries by the wonders operated through the intercession (not the *bones*) of B. J. LABRE. The miraculous† cure of the Nun, mentioned in that passage, is far better proved in my mind, than many crimes for which men lose their lives in our courts of justice. A cure is as much a fact as a murder; and that man must be much blinded by prejudice, who will not admit the same proofs for the one as for the other.

Perhaps, to the reasons assigned by Mr. G. for not entering the lists with me, an enlightened public will add another far more solid. But what are his reasons? The *first* is, some important business in a distant court of judicature. However important this business, it cannot be of more consequence than to expose the absurdity of the Catholic faith, and, thereby, perhaps, to open the eyes, not only of the American, but also the European Catholics. Why did he attack me, if he did not intend to defend himself against
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* If we are all fools for believing *transubstantiation*, &c. it is an innocent, speculative folly, which does not make us worse parents or children, rulers or subjects. When Mr. Lee, the present Governor of *Maryland*, who, since the time he filled that office last, had from a Protestant become a most zealous Roman Catholic, was re-elected, a warm Protestant exclaimed: “*Lord! what a shame to choose a man for Governor who believes in transubstantiation.*”

† Mr. G. disbelieves all miracles—But is there not something miraculous in his being struck with the Palsy in his right hand, at the very time he was writing all his blasphemies against God and his Saints? [*This is a positive fact.*] If he will believe, perhaps he may be made whole.

my answers? * The post that rides between *Boston* and *Lincoln*, could, I suppose, bring his writings to the press.

Mr. G.'s *second* reason for declining the off-red combat, is more NOTABLE still; it is the fear that each side may claim the day, as it happened in *bloody*† *Queen MARY's* time. If this reason were solid, Mr. G. and many others might spare themselves a torrent of eloquence, in their debates upon the important questions which come before our General Court; for I dare say, that nine times out of ten, the champions on both sides think their own arguments the most weighty. Mr. G. should remember, that it is not we ourselves, but an impartial public, that must judge to which side the victory belongs—I have now "*waded through*" Mr. G.'s performance (to use a *part* of his *elegant, respectful* phrase concerning the HOLY FATHERS) and at length have discovered, what greatly puzzled me at first, that is, why Mr. G. should use the plural style—it is, I must presume, to declare, that so laboured a piece, in which wit, argument and decency, are such predominant features, is not wholly his own production, but the joint effort of several as deep heads as his own.

I will now, for the sake of argument, suppose that Mr. G. has invincibly proved every point which I disputed with him. I will grant him, that *St. Jerome* is a *liar*, and *St. Austin* *impenetrable*, that the words "*I believe, because it is impossible,*" were written by either of the just mentioned Saints, or that they are incapable, by any "*Jesuitism,*" of a favourable interpretation, or, if he choose, that they are flat nonsense. I will grant further, that I

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* *Quere.*—Ought not all Americans to regard as inimical to their happy Constitution, the man, who, without offering any argument, holds up to public ridicule and contempt any class of men, and thereby attempts to deprive them of that esteem of their fellow-citizens to which they have an unalienable right?

† There is nothing which Protestants more frequently reproach to Catholics than their blind submission to their guides. This reproach, however, may be retorted with the greatest justice. For let but one of their writers, utter a misrepresentation of a Catholic dogma or character, and they all immediately, like so many sheep, follow his footsteps. Some fiery reformer in the days of religious intolerance, was pleased to style *Queen MARY bloody*, and this epithet, without any examination, has been implicitly copied by every succeeding writer of the dissenting societies; though it will appear evident to any one who will be at the pains to compare her reign with that of her sister *ELIZABETH*, that, considering the amazing outrages and insults which she had to endure, she was far the least sanguinary of the two—But she was a Papist, and therefore she must necessarily be bad.

was converted by the *miracle-working bones of B. J. Labre*, though I never saw one of them—All this granted, what is it to the purpose? If I mentioned these things, every reader must have seen, that they were by the bye; but that my principal aim was to call on Mr. G. to substantiate his calumnious charge, that the doctrines of “*transubstantiation, purgatory, &c.*” have been super-added to primitive Christianity, by “*selfish, designing, crafty and lying Priests,*” or that they have been added to it at all. I now renew my challenge, to meet him in the open field of manly argument. He has my permission, also, to call to his aid whatever auxiliaries he pleases. I give Mr. G. notice, that I shall not think myself obliged to answer any piece which is not subscribed by his own name.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

P. S. Mr. Editor, if you continue to extract from Mr. G.’s book his decent and liberal remarks concerning the Roman Catholics and their religion, I hope your readers will appreciate them according to their just value.

ON THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

1. THE *first* argument, to prove that the Roman church holds the same doctrine which the Apostles delivered, proceeds thus:—Either the Roman church hath uninterruptedly conserved the Apostles’ doctrine, or she hath changed it in process of time: But she hath not changed it. For if she had, the authors, the times, the places, and circumstances of this change could be distinctly marked out. As often as religious innovations have taken place, or heresies arisen, so often have they been recorded by historians. Thus we know exactly the time when the Arian heresy began, the places in which it was broached, the names of its author and adherents, &c. The same is to be said of the Nestorians, the Eutychians, and of all other heretics. But Protestants could never assign the time, place, or author of that change which they impute to the mother church. A certain proof that it is not real, but their own chimera. To feel more forcibly the weight of this argument, it must be remarked, that all nations are naturally inclined to exclaim and excite rumours, whenever any new doctrine is preached, especially if it touch the capital points of their belief. Hence contests arise, writings are published, councils are assembled; nor is it possible that historians, pro-

fare as well as ecclesiastical, should not observe and transmit such events—and, in fact, we have them recorded in the histories of all the different sects which have ever existed since the beginning of Christianity. Who, then, can be so credulous as to believe, that so great an innovation, as is pretended, has been effected in the Roman church; that so many new doctrines, some of the most mysterious, as those of the Mass and the real Presence, others practical and burthensome, as those of confession and satisfaction, have been every where introduced without any reclamation? How was it possible that so many millions of men should abandon the faith of their forefathers and embrace a new one, and that no vestige of so stupendous a change should exist in the writings, traditions, or monuments of the countries where it is said to have happened? The man who can believe such an absurdity, must (to use the words of a Protestant writer on another subject) “have faith, not only to remove, but, to swallow mountains.” When Luther and Calvin attempted to change the faith of the church in which they were born, controversies arose, writings were published, contentions, and even wars, took place. All the histories of these times are filled with the troubles and reclamations, which their innovations occasioned. And yet nothing similar happened, when the Roman church changed the doctrine received from the Apostles! Strange indeed! But what greatly increases the wonder, is, that the change objected against us, is concerning *precisely* the same points about which Catholics and Protestants still dispute.

2. A second proof of the *Apostolicity* of the doctrine professed by the present Roman church is, that it never received the name of any man. All setters-forth of new doctrines, *unavoidably* left their own names to their doctrine and followers. Hence the Simonians, Ebionites, Arians, Macedonians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Socinians, &c. Nor can men speak of their distinguishing tenets without using the terms, *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* doctrine, &c. If, therefore, any one had brought about that change of faith, with which Protestants reproach the Roman church, that man must have given his name to his disciples; and, consequently, the Roman church, which had admitted such a change, would have been called by the name of the innovator. Yet neither the Roman church, nor doctrine ever received the addition of any human name, but always was, and to this day is, termed CATHOLIC, both by friends and enemies. Therefore, the pretended change is a mere groundless fiction.

3. The Roman church has certainly changed nothing, in the points contested between her and the Protestants, since the 8th century, in which happened the schism of the Greeks. For, it is evident,

evident, from the writings of these schismatics themselves, that they now hold every article of faith which the Protestants contest with the Catholics. Now, if the Roman church had introduced these points since the schism, the Greeks would never have admitted them into their creed; on the contrary, from their great hatred and aversion to the Latin church, they would have bitterly condemned the novelty. By the same mode of reasoning it is proved, that, in the 5th century, the Roman church already held the doctrines, which now discriminate her from her protesting brethren, such as *transubstantiation, the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, the invocation of Saints, praying for the dead, &c.* For these are now dogmas of the Nestorians and Eutychians, who sprung up in that age, and who have still very numerous churches in the East. No man, who knows any thing of the violent reproaches which the Oriental schismatics have ever made, and still make, against the Roman church, for mere trifling ceremonies, will ever think, that they would, tamely and without reclamation, subscribe to such important innovations as those in question.

In fine, the Roman church did not add the contested articles to her faith in the four first ages of Christianity, because (as we have before remarked) there does not remain, in all antiquity, the smallest vestige of such a change; because, in those ages, the writers of that communion were strongly attached to Apostolic traditions, constantly referred to the old doctrines, and rejected all novelties with horror, as is evident to every one who has read any of their works; and, because the Protestants themselves, commonly, regard the church of that period as the true church of Christ, and venerate the four first * general councils, which were held, in the 4th and 5th centuries by the united Greeks and Latins, against the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, and Eutychians.

ON

* The councils here referred to, are :—1. The first Nicene council held in the year 325, at which were present 318 bishops, the greatest part of them venerable for the sufferings endured, and wounds received from the heathen persecutors in the cause of the faith. Who would not wish to be united in belief to such glorious confessors? Were such men likely to corrupt the sacred deposit of the faith transmitted to them from the Apostles? They solemnly condemned the heresy of Arius, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ.

2. The first council of Constantinople, assembled in 383. One hundred and fifty bishops, there collected, condemned Macedonius who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

3. The

ON LUTHER.

I MOST heartily wish that all Protestants had read as much of Luther's works as I have. The least fruit to be expected from it would be an extreme astonishment, joined to a sovereign contempt for the author. No book or sermon against their doctrine would produce so good an effect. If they were not converted immediately, the disgust they would conceive for every thing that came from this man, would be at least a distant preparation. For they would see in his writings the most arrogant, the most self-sufficient, the most abusive, the most indecent, the most outrageous person that, perhaps, ever existed. His indelicate ideas, his coarse and often impious expressions, his extravagant sallies against the Popes, his furious attacks upon the then reigning powers, his sharp and fiery style, always swoln with pride, distilling gall, breathing insult and vengeance ; all this would convince them, that this man, or rather demoniac, could never have been a proper organ for the Holy Ghost. But men will run into every excess when they abandon God, and give heed to the father of lies. Luther is a most striking illustration of this remark. In what I am going to relate I shall not employ popular and fabulous reports, but the very words of Luther, as they stand in his works, published at Wittenburg, Jena and Altenburg. "Awaking," says he, "about midnight, the Devil began to dispute with me in my heart ; (for he frequently troubles me in the night.) Do you reflect, great Doctor, that you have said Mass almost every day for fifteen years together ? What if you have committed so many idolatries, and, instead of adoring the body and blood of Christ, have adored only bread and wine ? I answered, that I was a priest lawfully ordained by the bishop ; that I had performed my office from obedience ; and that, having had the sincere intention of consecrating, I saw no reason why I had not *really* consecrated.

Satan

3. The first council of Ephesus, convened in 431—against *Nestorius*, who taught that there are two persons in Christ, and that the Virgin Mary is not the mother of God—200 bishops were present.

4. The council of Chalcedon, consisting in 636 bishops, and held in 451. It anathematized the error of *Eutyches*, who maintained that there is but one nature in Christ.

The Popes, by their legates, presided in all these councils.

Satan replied : In the churches of the Turks and Pagans, is not every thing performed with as much order and obedience ? Is, therefore, their worship good and blameless ? But what if your ordination was invalid, and your intention of consecrating was as vain and useless as that of Turkish priests in the exercise of their ministry, or as that of the false priests of Jeroboam ?—Here," adds Luther, " a great sweat seized me, and my heart began to beat in a strange manner. The Devil adduces reasons with much subtilty, and pushes them with still more force ; he has a strong, rough voice, and is so pressing that he scarcely gives leisure to breathe. Hence I conceive how some persons have been found dead in their bed. He can stifle them, or in the dispute he can so frighten the soul as to force it to quit the body. This is what I thought would happen to me more than once."—After this preamble, Luther mentions the reasons which Satan used to combat the Mass ; and which persuaded him to abolish it among his sectaries ; adding, that, if others had heard the Devil reason as he had, they would not appeal so often to the practice of the church and to the usage of antiquity.—He says all he can to persuade us of the reality of this conversation. He gives us the very words of Satan ; mentions the qualities of his voice, the nature of his arguments, the impression which the whole makes on the body and soul, and the sad effects which sometimes follow ; pretending that Jerom Emser and Ecolampadius, who were found dead in their beds, were killed by the attacks of the Devil.—Yet the arguments employed by this fiend are so weak and pitiful, that we can scarcely believe them to have been proposed by so penetrating and subtle a spirit. If it was really a Devil that urged them, he must have counted much on the docility of the disciple and on the dispositions of his heart ; and, if he really thought them capable of convincing sensible persons, I must conclude that among devils, as among men, there is a very strange inequality. But whether this story be true or false, Luther must have been the most imprudent and blind of men, either to have listened to so bad a master, or to have formed a tale which so greatly dishonours his cause ; for, if he really had this conference with Satan, he must have known that so wicked a being could teach nothing good, and that, far from interesting himself for the glory of God, his principal study is to oppose it. But if this conversation be wholly fabulous, he committed the most signal folly in attempting to gain belief to a story, which, if believed, must give us the most disgusting idea of its author. In a word, either Luther had *really* the Devil for instructor, or else he wished to appear to have received his instructions. A real correspondence with the father of lies is not surely very proper to conciliate much authority to the first adversary of the sacrifice of Mass. God forbid that we should derive our sentiments,

timents, on this holy subject, from so bad a teacher ;—and the ambition of appearing to have such a connexion, shows so extravagant and disordered a disposition, so bad and depraved a taste, as to make the pretendant to it appear as bad as if the correspondence had effectively taken place. We cannot read a tale so ill-combined, so absurd, so contrary to good sense and to his own interest, without suspecting that the author's head, when he wrote it, was troubled by the fumes of wine or something else. Or rather, we can scarcely read it without adoring Providence for permitting that he, who first attacked the Mass and endeavoured to bring it into contempt, should cover himself with disgrace by confessing to the world, that his first thoughts against this adorable sacrifice were suggested by the Devil, and that from him he received the arms with which he combated it. It is not natural for a man to dishonour himself ; and, therefore, that Luther should publish this dialogue between himself and his master, must be the effect of divine vengeance, which punished his outrage on the Mass by that very infamy which he endeavoured to fix on our holy mysteries. I will add, that it was also an effect of an infinitely wise Providence, that Luther should so far forget himself as to boast of his familiarity with Satan. The horror of such a commerce was a preservative to the ignorant, and the extravagance of such a boast disgusted the enlightened, and by this double effect a sort of barrier was made against the torrent of seduction.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

The following may serve as a proof that the boasted liberality of the ministers of Boston consists wholly in words,

WEDNESDAY last, after a long and painful illness, died, Mrs. ANN BRIGHT, widow of the late Mr. Richard Bright. She was distinguished by every virtue which can render a woman happy in herself, and amiable to others. But, that which particularly crowned all her other excellent qualities, was, Charity to the Poor. Hundreds are now living, from whose eye she has frequently wiped the tear of distress, by imparting to them those *mites* which she could bestow. This her attentive goodness to the needy members of Jesus Christ, doubtless, drew upon her the signal grace of a conversion to the true *Catholic faith* ; which faith, after the maturest examination, and many hard struggles with the prejudices of education, she boldly professed for about a year and a half before her decease ; and so notoriously did she profess it, that

that *almost* all her Protestant friends abandoned her on that account. Two days before her death, I arrived from a place six hundred miles distant, urged on by her pressing request to see me once more. No sooner did she behold me, than she declared her steady and unwavering belief of every article which the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH believes, and received from me the sacraments of penance, eucharist, and extreme unction, with the most edifying piety:—Yet, notwithstanding these unequivocal proofs of her belonging to MY church, she has scarcely breathed her last, when a Protestant Parson, and that very Parson too, whom she had refused to see in her sickness, is called in to bury her.

I appeal to the candor of every denomination, whether such conduct is not a manifest violation of the will of the dead, which mankind have ever regarded as sacred; and whether it ought to be tolerated in a land which professes so much respect to the rights of conscience. However, that I may not be wanting to my duty, I shall celebrate a Mass for the repose of her soul to-morrow, at ten o'clock in the morning, at which time I shall also deliver a discourse. The Catholic church, in School-street, will be open, as usual, to all descriptions of persons; but the Catholics are expressly invited.

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

Boston, May 25, 1792.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM MR. ALLEGRE, SEN.
TO MR. THAYER.

[The following Letter was written originally in French, and was translated by a Scotch lady, who herself also became a convert to our holy faith, while I was at Paris. That it may be the means of darting some rays of light into the minds of my en-darkened countrymen, is my sincere prayer.

JOHN THAYER, *Catholic Missionary.*]

Sir,

Avignon, July 20, 1788.

MY gratitude to you on account of the share* you have had in my conversion, engages me to send you a minute account of the circumstances attending it. I shall now therefore acquit myself of my duty to you, and invite you to join with me in returning thanks to GOD, for the happy change which he has wrought in my heart. With what pleasure will you not learn, that, at the very time when you were receiving the abjurations of several Protestants, the history of your conversion was read with fruit in the remoter provinces of France !

I am the son of a Protestant clergyman, and have been myself a teacher of the reformed religion. My father dying while I was very young, left his three sons, of whom I am the oldest, to the care of our mother, a most respectable woman, whose only business, from that period, was to take care of our education, and inspire us with proper sentiments of virtue and morality. For this purpose she placed us at the college of the Doctrinarians† at Nismes, and fixed herself in that town. I had hardly finished my first studies there, when this good mother, preferring our interests to her own ease, quitted her country and her friends to accompany us to Lausanne, where I lived six years, under her immediate inspection.

I must here give thanks to GOD, for having been educated by such an instructress, whose edifying example and pious instructions,
by

* Mr. Allegre, in a letter to the Superior of the seminary in which I resided at the time when the above was written, expresses himself, concerning the effect which the history of my conversion produced upon him, thus :—" I ought to confess that the relation of Mr. T's. conversion has tended much to forward mine. I had long doubted of the Protestant religion ; I saw the defects of Calvin's system :—For some months past, especially, I was no longer a Protestant ; but I was not yet a Catholic. Doubt concerning religion to an upright and feeling mind, is a frightful state. I wanted an example to encourage me in my resolutions ; I found it in Mr. T." He adds, in the same letter : " I have chosen for my abjuration the festival of St. Peter, in order to acknowledge, in that great Saint, the head of the church, under Jesus Christ." He begs a part in the prayers of all good Christians, and exclaims : " Oh ! how this communion of prayers in the Catholic church delights me !"

† A community of men, who, among other useful functions, superintend the education of youth in several colleges in France.

by degrees, corrected me of my faults, sowed the first seeds of virtue in my heart, and thus distantly paved the way for my future conversion. The anxious care and tenderness of my worthy mother prevented me from giving in to the libertinism of the age. But the Devil, who has more than one method of perverting souls, inspired me, while yet in philosophy, with the desire of reading the works of our modern unbelievers. Dangerous and despicable authors! who put on the mask of virtue and religion, in order to sap more effectually the very foundation of Christianity itself;---authors, the knowledge of whom would alone make us proof against all their vain philosophy, however specious and seducing by the beauty of expression and magic eloquence of style. This was the language which virtuous persons held to me; but I was deaf to its voice. I undertook to defend their errors; GOD knows how sincerely I repent it.

The bad principles which I imbibed from the reading of these books, insensibly diminished my sentiments of religion, and reduced my Christianity to a very narrow compass. I then began to feel the convenience of that principle of the Protestant religion, which makes every man judge of his own faith: I formed to myself a system of religion, from which all mysteries were banished. In vain might they have opposed to me the authority of the most formal texts of Scripture; I could easily have eluded their force by giving them a turn favourable to my principles; and in this I should have followed the example, not only of the Socinians, but of very many Protestants, who deny the eternity of hell torments, the mystery of the Trinity, the existence of devils, &c. though they are all clearly revealed in the inspired books. It may be said, in general, that the Protestants deceive themselves by the respect which they pretend to have for the Scripture, which, in reality, is no more to them than an imaginary judge, to whom they dictate what they will, and in whose decisions they see nothing but what they choose to believe.

I remained above a year in this kind of scepticism, too common amongst Protestants. I had not, however, absolutely adopted it. I had doubts, I feared to be deceived, I often begged of GOD to inspire me with a knowledge of his truth. A long illness, which interrupted the progress of my studies, gave me time to reflect seriously on religion: I was far from believing any of its mysteries; GOD changed my heart in an extraordinary manner. One night, after a long conversation upon Socinianism, with a person whose name it is not necessary to mention, I went to bed; next day, I felt a great alteration in my manner of thinking: I no longer felt any repugnance to believe those tenets which I had hitherto rejected. GOD leaves not his works imperfect; he completes what he has begun, and this he did in my behalf. No longer a

Socinian, I entertained doubts of the truth of Calvinism. The name of Calvinist hurt my feelings; for, besides its proving the novelty of my belief, I did not like to think myself the disciple of a man. Further, I saw no reason why Luther, Calvin, and their followers, might not be ranked among heretics. Like them, Luther, the head of the reformers, maintained opinions contrary to the avowed belief of all Christians. Like them, he chose amongst the doctrines which were received, admitted those which he liked, and neglected all the rest. Like them, he withdrew from the authority of the church in which he had been educated, without joining any other. Like them, he was anathematized by the church assembled in general council. Like them, he protested against the council which condemned him.

The works of Nicôl  against the Protestants brought on new reflections: I could no longer doubt of their schism. To avoid this reproach, the Protestants reply, that indeed they did separate themselves from the Roman Catholic Church; but then it was not the true church. Where then was the true church before Luther and Calvin? They are obliged to answer that it was invisible. We press them by the following argument, to which I have never seen an answer:—

The true church must always endure, according to the promises of its Founder:—But it cannot subsist without a *profession of faith*, since it is the duty of the faithful to confess Jesus Christ before men. Therefore, the true church must always be visible. Nic  le, however, was not the only person who made me suspect the reformation; the polemical writings of the Protestants, especially those of Jurieu, had the like effect. You, Sir, are probably acquainted with the fanaticism of this minister, and have remarked his glaring absurdities. But to confine myself to the most famous of his works: What idea could I form to myself of a system which only admits Protestants to the church of Christ, by opening its gates to all kind of sects, however opposite to one another in principle and belief?

With my mind thus anxious and perplexed, I was sent to apply myself to those studies which were necessary for the ministry. During the period which I dedicated to this object, I might, perhaps, have forgotten my difficulties and doubts, had it not been for the wonderful consistency I had observed in the principles of the Catholic religion. I remarked to a friend, that I looked upon this as a proof of its divine origin and truth. He replied, that it only proved its antiquity. This answer, in the light in which I saw it, could in no wise diminish the respect which I had conceived for the Catholic church. I may say that even at that time I was a Catholic; since, had I then laboured under any very dangerous illness, I should not have hesitated to send for a priest, and should have overlooked the few remaining difficulties I entertained.

In

In those dispositions, I left Lausanne, and returned to France, charmed with the idea of being in a country where the Catholic religion was established, and where I could readily meet with spiritual assistance should death suddenly attack me. But not to be too hasty in my conduct, I again applied to the search of truth. I began by reading Bossuet's history of the Variations of the Protestants, so well calculated to inspire Protestants with doubts on their belief. I felt the justness of the remarks which the preface contains. " Did the Protestants, (says the illustrious author) well know in what manner their religion was formed, what inconsistency was shewn in drawing up their creed, and what changes they have undergone since ; did they know how they were first separated from us, and then among themselves ; they would not surely be well pleased with this reformation, of which they boast ; and to tell frankly what I think upon the subject, it would inspire them with contempt." And indeed what other opinion can be entertained of the pretended reformation, when in its history we read accounts of the passions of its author, and the indecent manner in which he introduces the Devil, as first inspiring him with the project of abolishing the Mass ?

Moreover, the different changes which the doctrines of the Protestants has undergone, and the continual divisions among themselves in which they have lived ever since their schism, ought to convince them, in my opinion—First, That truth is not with them, since truth is *one* : and, 2dly, That an infallible tribunal is absolutely necessary to terminate religious disputes, and to unite mankind in charity and peace.

Notwithstanding my progress in the search of truth, I did not yet declare myself in its favour, because I had still some doubts which I wished to have cleared up. I remained during a whole twelvemonth in the quality of preacher at St. Laurence, in the diocess of Nismes, and afterwards went in the same capacity to Moutaran near D'Uze's. It was Providence itself which conducted me to this parish, whose respectable Vicar was, by his pious prayers and edifying conduct, to be a great instrument in advancing the work of my conversion. I could not help being affected by the regularity and disinterestedness of this good priest, and his great love for the poor increased my regard for that religion which had inspired him with such a fervent zeal.

Under different pretences, I had long conversations with him, in which, making a proper distinction between matters of faith, and of mere opinion, he clearly exposed to me the doctrines of the Catholic church, and gave me many motives of credibility in its behalf. Not being able to propose all my doubts in those interviews, I soon began an epistolary correspondence with him, during the course of which he entirely removed all my difficulties and doubts.

doubts. The worship of the Saints was that at which I hesitated most, because I thought it contrary to Scripture ; which, however, no where forbids us to honour the servants of God, and to have recourse to their prayers. The invocation of the blessed Virgin, in particular, seemed to be condemned by the words of Christ, when his mother begged him to work a miracle at the marriage of Cana :—“ *Woman, what have I to do with thee ?*”^{*} And I did not consider, that, notwithstanding the apparent harshness of his answer, he, however, heard and granted her request ; since at her intercession he worked a miracle, which was so much the greater, as it deranged, in some measure, the order of his Providence: the time of manifesting his glory being not yet come.

I was more inclined to believe the real presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharist, when I read without prejudice the institution of this august sacrament. I have since seen many proofs of this doctrine ; and indeed the principles of the Calvinists convinced me it was consistent with salvation, since they offer their communion to the Lutherans, who believe the real presence, and in which doctrine they all unanimously agree, that no venom is contained.

The doctrine of the real presence once admitted, I found no difficulty either in the manner in which Catholics understand it, or in the consequences which they deduce from it ; on the contrary, they appeared to me very reasonable and just. But the prejudices of my childhood were continually rushing in upon me, and resisted all the means of instruction which I made use of. Fully persuaded that GOD alone could conduct me to the truth, I had recourse to him by prayer : This I had never neglected ; but at that time I was more assiduous in the practice of it. I continually entreated the Father of Lights to enlighten my understanding, and I often said, with the greatest fervour : “ *O God, open the eyes of my understanding, that I may see the wonders of thy law, that I may know in what religion I should live and die.*” Not to put any obstacles in the way of God’s grace, which was become so necessary to me, I endeavoured to correct myself of my slightest

^{*} This text in the Greek original is “ *ti emoi kai soi gunai ?*” “ *What to me and to thee, woman ?*” in Latin “ *Quid mihi et tibi, mulier ?*” as the learned authors of the Catholic Vulgate have with precision and propriety rendered it. Beza has appropriately expressed its meaning in Latin by “ *Quid mihi tecum,*” an idiom obvious enough to scholars, yet often misunderstood by sciolists in that language. By too close an adherence to the words of Beza’s latin phrase here, and without due regard to the sense of the original, the authors of the *legalized* English translation of the Protestant Bibles, have ambiguously, if not erroneously, expressed the text as quoted in the above letter.

slightest faults ; I even imposed penances and mortifications on myself. GOD was touched with my prayers and the good dispositions with which himself had inspired me.

A fortnight before the end of the year which I was to pass at Moutaran, being undetermined what to do, or rather being determined to take another year for deliberation, the pious Vicar of whom I have already spoken, sent me the account of the conversion of a Protestant Minister, which was effected at Rome, about the time of the miracles of the venerable Labre. This little work made a great impression on me. I could not call in question the reality of those miracles which Mr. Thayer had examined with all the incredulity of a Protestant. He had minutely discussed the controverted points, and only yielded to evidence. Such well-founded miracles, so strong an example as your's, Sir, were the causes which completed my conversion. I read with transports of joy the little prayer which is in your narrative ; and often addressed it to God with the most lively desire of being heard. I then only considered of the means of getting to Avignon ; and having made to God the painful sacrifice of my family and state, and settled my affairs, I immediately went to throw myself into the arms of the Superior of the seminary of St. Charles, who received me with every mark of charity and friendship which can be expected from a true minister of Jesus Christ. My first care was to propose to the Superior, and the other worthy directors of the house, all the doubts which I either had entertained, or which still remained unsolved. The answers which I received left me nothing more to wish. I afterwards meditated with care on the great proofs of the truth of the Catholic religion, and a strong conviction soon took the place of all my former doubts. I earnestly looked forward to the happy moment of my abjuration, which was to be on the feast of St. Peter, my patron. Since that blessed day, what numberless graces have I not received from God ! He has sometimes vouchsafed to admit me to his table : To the greatest anxiety and incertitude with which I was perplexed, he has made tranquillity and peace to succeed ; and the fear of death and of the judgments of God have given way to confidence and joy. I now desire nothing more for myself, except that God will add to the many graces I have received, that of gratitude proportioned to the greatness of his benefits. "*Because his mercy is great upon me, and he has delivered my soul from the lower hell,*" Psalm lxxxv. 13.

This, Sir, is in a few words the history of my conversion. I wish it may tend to your edification.

I beg you not to forget, in your prayers and sacrifices, one, whose conversion is, in some sort, under God, your work.

I am, &c.

PETER ALLEGRE, sen.

A LETTER

A LETTER from a young STUDENT in FRANCE, to a Friend in AMERICA, giving him an Account of his CONVERSION to the Roman Catholic Faith.

Honoured and dear Sir,

OUR classic year being now over, Mr. ———, to whom I am every day more and more indebted, has given me leave to pass a few weeks in the country, in order to relax my mind, and thus to prepare myself for the further pursuit of my studies. I profit of my leisure to write to you. The greatest part of my time, since I wrote you last, has been taken up in studying French and Latin ; in both which I have had no little success. I have likewise consecrated some time to religious inquiries. This last study has caused me to make many serious reflections. But, before I impart, them to you, I think it my duty to inform you at once, with openness and candour, that I have changed my belief. Let not so unexpected an event offend you. It was not the effect of levity or seduction. Nor can I indeed look upon it as the work of man : GOD alone was able to subdue at once my heart and mind, and overturn those prejudices, which so strongly wedded me to the religion in which I was educated. In order to justify my conduct to you, my dear Sir, I will in simplicity and sincerity relate how I proceeded. When I first arrived in France, Mr. ——— was so good as to seek out a boarding-school, where none should speak to me on matters of religion. He told me, at the same time, to thank with politeness all who should enter on that subject with me, assuring them that, when I should be more advanced in age and experience, I would examine into it. The same rule of discretion you marked out to me when I left America ; and accordingly, when any one proposed to me any argument on religion, I replied, I left it to be answered by our ministers. Notwithstanding all the precautions of Mr. ———, the boarding-school, where I was placed, contained some very bad boys ; but, through the mercy and grace of God, I kept myself out of their contagious company, and did not imitate their corrupt conduct. I frequented punctually the Protestant meetings at Paris. I was one day introduced by a fellow-student to the acquaintance of an Irish gentleman who had been a long time in France, and understood both English and French. He was born of Protestant parents, and several years ago became a Catholic. He was very well versed in both religions, of an amiable and pacific disposition, and very pious. He treated me with the greatest kindness and politeness, and invited me to visit him often. I had some reluctance at first, lest our conversation should fall on religion, which I had hitherto carefully

fully avoided. But when, after several visits, I found that he never said a word on that head, my reluctance abated. He soon became to me a father and a friend. A long time passed in conversations on indifferent subjects. At length, however, he observed to me: "That it was the duty of every Christian to know the grounds of his religion, that his belief might be reasonable, and that he might be able to answer any one who questioned him about it." These few words struck me in a surprising manner, and occasioned in me many serious thoughts and great anxiety of mind. "It is true," said I to myself, "that the SON of GOD came down from Heaven to teach us the way of salvation; it is, therefore, essential to know *certainly* what he has revealed. Of two parties that contradict and condemn each other, one is certainly in the wrong. To be indifferent on so important a question is a thing impossible for one who seriously reflects. The truth is my first good: to seek it, my first duty: it will promote my peace and happiness both here and hereafter. I must then search after it; but how? We Protestants admit of no authority to guide us in our religious inquiries; and yet the Scriptures are an everlasting source of contentions without an infallible interpreter. Discussion is an abyss where the most learned are lost without being able to decide any thing. The advice of a guide is dangerous; for, if I consult any one, he will endeavour to persuade me, that his party is the best; and thus I shall risk the building of my belief and salvation on another's opinion."

Judge, dear Sir, of my perplexity. The troubles of my mind greatly injured my health. I reflected, I prayed, I began to read the history of the Christian church. While I was sitting one day in a very pensive mood, a thought occurred to my mind which soon dispelled all my anxiety. The thought was this: "Both parties accuse each other of innovation. It is certain, that those who have innovated in the doctrines of Christ, must be in the wrong. Now which is that party?" I continued to read, and found my question decided. The same belief in all points is now held, and the same worship, which was in use in the Christian church of the first centuries, is now practised by the Roman Catholic church: It is, therefore, the same church: and we are in the wrong. I read the history of the Protestant religion, which was before unknown to me. With what eagerness did I begin it! But I was struck with amazement, when I found that *Luther* was a Monk, who had apostatized from the Roman Catholic church; when I saw his ambition, his unbridled passions, his fury, and all the evils he caused to religion and government. I could not believe all this, until I had seen it in his own letters. I shuddered as I read them. I became ashamed of our origin. "Certainly," said I to myself, *Luther* could not be a man sent from God, nor animat-

ed by his Holy Spirit, who is all humility, gentleness and love." I made the same reflection on *Calvin*, *Zuinglius*, &c. I was astonished when I saw all these turbulent Apostles forming their different sects, and establishing their numberless and disagreeing opinions; united in nothing but in the same hatred against *Rome*, and in such an unlimited toleration of each other, as effectually overturns all belief. The Protestant religion appeared to me like the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of languages, and not the work of God.—Overwhelmed by the evidence of facts, and perplexed by a thousand contrary thoughts, I could neither retain nor hide my tears. "If all this be true, said I to myself (and I cannot doubt of it) how is it not known? Or, how can one deny facts which so plainly speak for themselves? For my part, I can neither resist, nor yield." Here difficulties occurred in crowds to my mind.—At length, I resolved to get them cleared up. For this purpose, I applied to the above-mentioned Irish gentleman, who had shewn such a great moderation, uprightness of heart, impartial love of the truth, and profound knowledge. He received me with paternal kindness and friendship. I laid before him the state of my mind and heart. I had conferences with him for more than a month, on contested points. He instructed me,—answered my difficulties, proposed to me others, and solved them himself,—cleared up all my doubts, and so enlightened me on every point, that he left me nothing more reasonably to desire.—Yet I did not rely on what I was told. I searched still further, and required plain texts, and undisputed facts. My eyes thus opened, I could no longer resist evidence itself. I saw the necessity of embracing the truth which I had discovered. But my heart still resisted. At length, when my conscience would no longer permit me to remain as I was, I went and opened my mind to Mr. ———. Neither you, Sir, nor my parents, could have made stronger opposition to my design than he did. He said all that could be said to deter me from taking such a step. But, seeing my perseverance, he insisted, at least, that I should first discourse with a Protestant minister. I did so. I applied to him whom I had often heard preach.—He acknowledged to me (what is true, and what decides all) that in the Protestant religion there is no *sure* way of finding out the truth. He defended his religion with zeal; but the arguments he employed were either wholly false, or nothing to the purpose. That conference only served to convince me, that the truth was on the Catholics' side. I related to Mr. ——— all that had passed between us. He persisted no longer in opposing what concerned my conscience and happiness, though I clearly saw his aversion to my abjuring the religion in which I had been educated. After having so long struggled against truth and the grace of GOD, (prin-

cipally

cipally through fear of displeasing my benefactors, friends and family) I at length yielded to the divine inspiration ; and with such consolation as cannot be expressed.

This, Sir, is the plain account of my proceedings ; and you see, that by following reason, it was impossible for me to act otherwise. For, *in the first place*, seeing all that I did, I could not but perceive that the Catholics were calumniated or not known, that the Protestants maliciously or ignorantly imputed to them errors, ridiculous opinions and practices. *Secondly*, Seeing that unity is essential to the true faith, I could not doubt one moment where it is to be found, having been so often witness to the jars and contentions of the different sects in America.—“ The true faith and my eternal salvation are in question, said I to myself ; I must, therefore, belong to that church in which there is the greatest certainty of finding them.” *Thirdly*, When I read the authentic history of both parties, I could not help seeing how far superior the one is to the other. On the one hand, perpetuity, unity, peace, constant uniformity, and all the marks of truth. On the other, novelty, division, passion, and all the marks of falsehood and heresy. In that situation, I was absolutely obliged to espouse the side which appeared to me to be best, or (what was more prudent, and what I really did) to search deeper into the matter, by having my difficulties cleared up. It greatly grieved me, Sir, that I was at such a distance from you, whom I should most assuredly have consulted in my troubled state. *Fourthly*, In the course of my inquiry, I saw, on the *one hand*, that the Catholics ground every point of faith on the holy Scriptures, and on the constant practice of the primitive church ; and, on the other hand, that the Protestants oppose subtle shifts and evasions to the plainest and most evident texts and facts—The natural conclusion was, that the first are in the right, and the second in the wrong.

When the Protestant minister, whom I visited, had overturned, by a sincere and necessary acknowledgment, the foundation of his religion, which he afterwards defended by insufficient arguments, I could not but be sensible of the great difference between the two persons I had consulted ; between their arguments, their parties, the victorious weight of the one side, and the weakness of the other, which falls of itself, and which they strive in vain to prop up. In fine, without being obstinate in voluntary and inexcusable blindness, it was impossible for me to withstand reason and truth, which daily pressed me more and more. Human persuasion had no part in my change. I had always feared its seducing power. Much less was I subject to illusion, or guilty of precipitation ; since I was slow and deliberate in my determination. I found myself drawn on from light to light, from consequence to consequence, by the sole power of the truth. I can well say, “ It is the Lord’s work, and it is truly wonderful,” in what manner I was

brought to my present state, notwithstanding the strongest disposition to resistance. But it is not a rare wonder here ; every day the like are wrought, and more glorious to the Catholic religion—I myself know many persons who were Protestants, and even some ministers, who, after long and serious examination, have embraced the Catholic faith, losing at the same time both their property and friends. But I have never seen or heard of a Catholic, who, without manifest motives of irreligious indifference, passion, or temporal interest, has become a Protestant—Nor do the Catholics seek to seduce and ensnare ; for while the common cry of Protestants against them is : *Flee from Popery and superstition*, the unanimous cry of the Catholics is that very reasonable one : *Search and see* ; and it always happens, that whoever will open his eyes, does see ; for the light of truth is bright, powerful and irresistible.

Do not think, Sir, from what I have said, that I am become a blind, slavish, superstitious, idolatrous Papist, such as Catholics are commonly represented by Protestants. I respect the POPE as the first of the Bishops, in the same manner as St. PETER, whose successor he is, was the first of the Apostles : I revere him as the centre of unity and the head of the church of Christ ; but I hold him to be incapable of changing one tittle of the faith which has been maintained by the church in all past ages. Such is the Roman Catholic faith, and mine. I submit to the authority established by Christ, because it is written : “ If any man hear not the church, let him be to thee as a heathen.” Far from being the slave of others’ opinions, my belief becomes every day more enlightened, and more stedfast ; and since I have embraced this religion, I have not had the least doubt concerning the truth of it. I find in the practice of it, and in the succour it affords, my support and joy—My worship is without superstition, or idolatry, of which, thanks be to GOD, I have the greatest abhorrence—I adore and serve my Maker in spirit and truth, and I strive to love him with my whole heart. This is my religion and my happiness. In the service of GOD I taste a pleasure that words cannot express. It is not the flame of enthusiasm ; it is a secret, peaceable sentiment which I feel in doing GOD’s holy will. I acknowledge I had not formerly the same sensibility and affection of heart ; it is only since GOD has shed forth in my soul his light and grace, that I have learned to truly feel and love. That has also influenced all my other sentiments.

Your kindnesses and favours, and those of Mr. ———, in time past, made an impression on my heart, and excited my admiration. But since this celestial religion has opened my mind and heart, I overflow with gratitude—I now see GOD in every thing ; I am too happy ! I speak to you, Sir, with candour and openness of heart, because I know your tender concern in all that regards me, and because I desire that you may see and acknowledge with me the

the hand of GOD in my conversion. No, Sir ; that perfect peace of mind, that profound calm, that inward and constant joy ; all that cannot be the fruit of illusion and error, which soon pass away. The only thing that could increase my felicity, would be to see my dear relations and friends partakers of it with me. This my greatest and most ardent desire ; this is what I daily beg of GOD, with all the fervour of my soul.

MR. PRINTER,

A FEW evenings ago, conversation turning on the contests in which Mr. THAYER has been engaged since his return from Europe, that gentleman, who was present, expressed himself to the following purpose : “ We read, says, he, of an Emperor who wished that the whole city of Rome had but one head, that he might have the pleasure of striking it off at a single blow.” What that Emperor wished in reality and from cruelty, I wish *figuratively*, from motives of charity, concerning the whole body of ministers in this country. That is, I should be glad, that in their *corporate* capacity, they would draw up and sign an exposition of what they conceive to be errors of our church ; *fairly and coolly* representing every point of Catholic faith and morality ; and shewing wherein each is inimical to salvation, declaring at the same time, which articles were the lawful causes of beginning the schism from the mother church, and of continuing it at present. Such a piece, I say, would give me an opportunity of cutting off all their heads at a single stroke, or (to drop the figure) of refuting them all at once, and of thus discovering to this deluded people, on how weak a foundation their religion leans. It is not, continued the Missionary, from an overweening opinion of my own talents, natural or acquired, that I make this declaration, (for in these I acknowledge many superiors among the ministers) but from a consciousness of having truth on my side, and from my knowing how to wield the Catholic arms. “ So confident am I (said he) that the victory would be adjudged to our church, that I would, myself, stand out of the contest, and would commit it to any other priest or even to a private Catholic who understands his religion and can write ; and I would leave the decision to an impartial Protestant public.”—Mr. T. went on : “ Mistake me not, Gentlemen ; think not that I desire to excite religious war in this peaceful land, of which I glory in being a native citizen : I think I cannot better act the part of a good member of the community than by challenging to an open controversy those who have been, and still are, the instruments of blinding the people, and filling them with unjust prejudices against the most considerable part of the civilized world : If all feel as I do, I am sure that theological questions may be canvassed with as much good temper and manners, as those of a political nature.

nature. I seek only the glory of God by enlightening the deceived : The man who takes off unjust preventions against any class of quiet citizens, and thereby promotes mutual confidence and brotherhood, is a friend to society ; In all my disputes I will never use personalities or misrepresentations : I will always write with that dispassionate coolness for which the public has already rendered me full justice : Acrimonious language betrays passion rather than love of truth : I wish to live in amity with the ministers, and that public discussion may not lessen private esteem." This, I think, was the substance of the conversation, If I am wrong, let Mr. T. set me right—If after so many repeated challenges from the Missionary, our ministers do not *publicly* take him in hand, I shall be among the many who think their cause incapable of a good defence, and that we have been for many years minister-ridden.

IMPARTIALIS.

MR. PRINTER,

A WRITER in a late gazette, whose signature is IMPARTIALIS, after trumpeting Mr. THAYER's "challenges" and his wishes for "an opportunity of cutting off all the heads, at a single stroke, of the whole body of Protestant ministers in this country," concludes with saying, "If after so many repeated challenges from the Missionary, our ministers do not *publicly* take him in hand, I shall be among the many who think their cause incapable of a good defence, and that *we* have been for many years *minister-ridden*." No Protestant could draw such a conclusion, either of the ministry or people, nor be the *rider* or the *ridden*, consistently with such principles as Mr. Thayer acknowledges to be fundamental principles of Protestants, viz. That our Bible contains the only and infallible rule of faith and eternal salvation, and that every man has the right of private judgment in matters of faith and the worship of God, or the right to search the Scriptures, to examine doctrines by the word of God, and to judge for himself, as every one must give account of himself unto God. This right of private judgment Mr. Thayer, in his narrative, gives us to understand, in the exercise of it, and in the full conviction of his judgment he abjured forever the claim of using it as the right of man, or as his own right ; and so subjugated his judgment and conscience to the Popish church, by his oath of allegiance to that church, as an infallible body ; that if he should only so far resume the power of examining the evidences of the infallibility of that church, or of the truth of her doctrines by scripture or reason, he would, *ipso facto*, become an heretic ! In the same narrative, he intimates, that he was coming into his native

native country with strong desires, yea hopes, of bringing the people here, over to Popery; that is, to bring us to abjure, as he had done, the essential right of examining for ourselves in matters of faith, &c. and expressed a hope, that the *surprising revolution* in America would open the door for his wished-for revolution in favour of Popery by his instrumentality! In all which he writes and talks like himself, that is, like a person void of thought and judgment; for how fast Popery falls into contempt in France, since the establishment of the rights of man in their civil constitution! And the revolution in America is in favour of all the rights of man; and the right of private judgment in matters of faith and worship, is established by all our constitutions of civil government, as the essential right of every citizen; therefore such persons, who abjure the right of private judgment in matters of religion, abjure the constitutional right of citizens, and become the abject creatures of the Pope of Rome; and if our legislature should send the Pope's Missionary home to Rome with the Pope on his back, neither the creature nor his rider could complain of being deprived of any constitutional right—for what has our civil constitution to do in a way of protection of the Pope in his pretended claim of right to judge for and dictate to Papists as their *infallible head*? And what has our constitution to do to protect such creatures, as citizens, who disclaim the right of thinking and judging for themselves in religion? It is certain that such persons, who have no right of private judgment, have no conscience, and consequently no claim to liberty of conscience! Therefore, what Protestant minister, who claims the right of thinking, examining, and judging for himself in matters of religion, as an essential right of man, can look upon it as acting in character to accept of a challenge for a public disputation, from a creature whom he knows to have abjured the right of private judgment, and become a *sworn slave* to the Pope and church of Rome, as infallible.

A. PROTESTANT.

August 23, 1792.

P. S. If Mr. *Thayer*, without thinking, and without resuming his absurd right of private judgment, will demonstrate, by clear reasoning, that the right of private judgment, claimed by Protestants as a fundamental principle, is not an essential right of man, and that Protestants ought, in the full exercise of this right, or from a full conviction of their own judgment, to abjure the right, and to bind themselves by a solemn oath, to submit their judgment and conscience for ever to the absolute controul of the infallible church of Rome, consisting of fallible men, equally accountable to **JESUS CHRIST**, the great Lord of conscience, with ourselves—he will then at one stroke cut off all the heads of our ministers!!!

Mr.

Mr. PRINTER,

AS the piece signed a PROTESTANT, comes under the description of anonymous scurrility, to which the Catholic Missionary has long ago declared he will make no reply, permit another Protestant to say a few words in his defence. I shall not take up the public's time in pointing out the unintelligibility of the writer's phraseology, the inconclusiveness of his logic, or his gross misrepresentation of Mr. THAYER's belief, concerning the Pope.* How far Mr. THAYER has hitherto shewn himself to be "*void of thought and judgment*," the impartial public has decided: This priest has ever acted with openness; from the very time of his return from Europe, he has been uniform in declaring his intention of labouring for the conversion of his countrymen, to what he thinks the *only* true faith; and every person who knows what advantages he quitted in Italy, France and England, (and there are several in this town who do) and his conduct here, must believe him sincere in his declaration.

Catholic priests were once accused of lurking in private, and of not daring, from a consciousness of the weakness of their cause, to appear. If ever they did lurk, the true reason, as is now evident, was the rigour of the laws against them. When there is liberty of conscience, none are bolder. your Protestant correspondent seems rather to have listened to his own prejudices, than to what Mr. T. has written; for this Missionary in his answer to *Simplex*, acknowledges every man's right of examining for himself, until he is fully convinced that God has appointed for him an infallible guide; that he is to use his reason in order to find this guide; but he asserts (and common sense approves his assertion) that when a man has found this guide, it is extremely absurd to refuse his submission. If Mr. T. could fully convince my judgment, that God has appointed an infallible guide to regulate the articles of my creed, as well as the conduct of my life, I would join his church immediately. This appears to me so important an article, and to involve in it so many others, that I am for giving the missionary a fair chance. Whoever hopes to attack Mr. T. with success, must first prove (it seems to me) that there is no revelation from God ordering a submission of private judgment to the decisions of the church.

* Mr. THAYER has often declared from the press, that he believes not the POPE's infallibility; and yet this writer, who pretends to have read his writings, has the unfairness to crowd this article into that gentleman's creed. If he has renounced the right of private judgment, he probably retains sense enough to tell us, what are the points of his belief.

church. We must show him that he is deceived in this, and then the whole body of his tenets falls of course. The Rev. Mr. LESSLIE attempted this, and in the judgment of us all failed in the attempt. His brethren in the ministry, from kindness to him, and from charity to their flocks, which may be misled by the persevering efforts of the Popish priests, ought to lend him a friendly hand, to get out of his present embarrassment. It would be unreasonable, among rational sons of liberty, to require Mr. T. to renounce his present system, while unconvinced that it is erroneous. The insinuation, that the Missionary has no right to legal protection, must excite indignation in the breast of every friend to the American constitution, but more especially in those who know the peaceable disposition of that priest in private life. To refute a man by exiling him from his native country, is what is called a *knock-me-down* argument; but does not give a very advantageous idea of the cause which is thus defended. This writer is not certainly the man who will convince the public, that our "*Protestant cause is capable of a good defence and that we have not been hitherto minister-ridden.*"

ANOTHER PROTESTANT.

August 26, 1792.

The following appeared in the Salem Gazette.

MR. PRINTER,

IT seems, by the squibs, in one or two of your papers of late, against Mr. Lesslie, as "a slow worm," and "a writer of Protestant bulls," &c. &c. that somebody is in great haste to have Mr. Lesslie's reply inserted, before you had finished Mr. Thayer's long piece in support of the infallibility of the *Roman Catholic Church*. People should give Mr. Lesslie time to prepare his reply, because he is a Protestant, who claims the right of private judgment, or to examine and judge for himself, as an essential right of man; but Mr. Thayer, in the exercise of his right of private judgment, has absolutely given up that right to the Popish church as an infallible body, and now totally disclaims all right to think, consider, examine, judge and believe for himself in matters of faith and eternal salvation!—and therefore what he writes, in such a *floundering* way, are the dictates of his infallible church. He does not dare to offer any thing to the public as the result of his own pri-

vate judgment, because he would thereby become a *heretic*! He believes the church of ROME to be infallible, because she says she is infallible. He believes the *Protestant BIBLE* to be an imperfect rule of faith and holiness, because the Popish church says it is imperfect. He believes that certain texts, in the Protestant Bible, do prove the infallibility of the Popish church, because that church says they prove it, as they interpret them. He believes that no person can be saved out of that church, nor any who does not believe the infallibility of that church, because that church teaches him thus to believe. He believes whatever doctrine that church teaches, is infallibly true, because she teaches the same, even though nothing can be produced from the holy Scriptures to support the doctrine. He therefore receives every doctrine of his faith as the word of *man*, and no doctrine of the Bible as being in truth *the word of God*. And the popish church on earth is the lord and master of his conscience. Hence what use are such persons to make of the Bible, who have no right of private judgment, no right to examine and consider what doctrines are taught them? Mr. Thayer, in *his challenge*, promises to renounce the Popish doctrines if he should be convinced that they are false; but how can a person be convinced, who disclaims the right of private judgment? In the narrative of his conversion he tells us how he renounced the right of private judgment, which he says is "a fundamental principle of Protestants;" and that he returned to his native country in hopes of prevailing with his countrymen to come into the bosom of the mother church, and be saved: But we must give up our right of examining and judging for ourselves! Is he such a simpleton, as to think of prevailing, at this day, with the citizens of these United States, to part with that fundamental right of man, to examine and judge for themselves in matters of everlasting importance! No; he who has no right to judge, has no power to think, but as the POPE dictates to him, whose Missionary he is! It is too late in the day for the Pope to send forth his Missionaries to persuade the sons of liberty to give up to him their right of judging for themselves. Tyranny in Popish governments is falling; the Pope lately was burnt in effigy at PARIS; and the *whore* of ROME is hated, and it is expected she will shortly be *made desolate and naked, and be burnt with fire*.

A PROTESTANT.

The following Letter was written, in answer to the foregoing, by a Gentleman in Philadelphia, to the Rev. Mr. THAYER, Catholic Missionary in Boston.

PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 26, 1792.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE seen by several eastern papers that you have been deeply engaged in controversy since your return to Boston. Your polite treatment of your adversaries, joined to the cogency of your arguments, must, I think, excite attention and good will towards you, in the minds of your very adversaries. The Protestant cause, on the contrary, must naturally lose ground among the enlightened and candid, when they consider the delays, the shuffling, the bad humour and scurrilous language, of our opponents, in endeavouring to refute our tenets. All this must demonstrate to them, that Popery is not so contemptible a religion as it is affectedly represented. If the Protestant religion be so clearly established in holy writ as to be discernible by the illiterate, why are the learned Protestants so embarrassed to reply to our proofs, why so divided among themselves?

I am led to these reflections by a *Salem Gazette* of last October, No. 262, which lately fell into my hands. The person, who there signs himself *A Protestant*, seems apprehensive of Mr. Lesslie's insufficiency to answer your arguments; else, why has he stepped in between the combatants? This is not fair play. Nay, it must produce an effect diametrically opposite to the wishes of your opponents. A discerning public seeing you attacked by *Barebones*, *Simplex*, the *Salemite*, and a croud of small paragraph writers, will naturally interest itself on your side, and cannot avoid suspecting that the Catholic religion must be a quite different system of belief from what it had been represented to be, before the glorious revolution of America had done away those penal laws, which violated the natural right of man to utter and defend his religious opinions.

I have been often surprised, that a people so generally eager for instruction as the Americans are, should be so little acquainted with the real doctrines of the far greatest society of Christians on earth. The sacred deposit of Christianity was handed down by the Catholic church to all the reformed societies which exist in America. Does not the imposing title of a reformation suppose a knowledge of the pre-existing corruption? Yet it is a certain fact, that the errors which are objected to the Catholic church by Protestants, are their own misconceptions. It is evident, that the Sa-

lem Protestant was more conversant with the *Emilius* of Rousseau, than with the authors who defend the Catholic church, which he reviles with so much bitterness. It would be too tedious to correct all his mistakes. Let us examine his leading principle—*A Protestant claims the right of private judgment, or to examine and judge for himself, as an essential right of man, in matters of faith and eternal salvation.*

Christianity is not a mere evolution or a declaration of the natural laws. It is moreover a revelation of mysteries, which natural reason alone could never discover, and enacts positive laws depending entirely on the divine choice. Jesus Christ requires, as indispensable conditions of the pardon of sin and admittance into supernatural bliss, that man believe in these mysteries, and observe these precepts. When God speaks, has man a natural right to weigh his revelation in the balance of reason, or to object to the fitness of supernatural precepts? The pretension would be absurd and impious. The inalienable right of a man, when God has not immediately spoken to him in person, is to examine by the light of natural reason, whether the revelation which is called divine be genuine. When its authenticity is once firmly established, the duty of man is to assent to the truths revealed by the God of wisdom, and to obey the precepts of the Lord of the universe. The *Protestant*, I flatter myself, will not controvert these principles.

We were not witnesses of the Christian revelation; but divine goodness intended the propagation of the benefit to us. Dare we prescribe the mode to God? *We have the inspired writings*, say the Protestants. We Catholics also receive them as the word of God: we revere them, as a code of divine laws. But are these sacred writings the only medium of information granted by God to man? I shall prove with the clearest evidence that they are not. Did mankind enjoy no benefit from divine revelation, before Moses wrote the Pentateuch? Did the Apostles defer the preaching of the gospel, until they had written the New Testament? There was therefore a channel of information concerning the saving doctrines of revelation, independent on the sacred writings of the old and new law. Were the just men before the time of Moses, were the first Christians therefore deprived of the essential rights of natural reason, because they could not enjoy the boasted liberty of framing, by their private interpretation of the Bible, fourscore different religions, as our modern Protestants have done? Will the *Protestant* insist, that man has an essential right to deduce contradictions from the word of God?

God requires from us the belief of mysteries and the observance of supernatural precepts. This revelation concerning both must have some determined meaning: He cannot reveal contradictories. That the meaning of the Sacred Writings is not always obvious, is
evident

evident from the many opposite sects, which divide the Protestant denomination. Could not God provide some means to decide such interesting doubts, without destroying the essential rights of human reason? Could he not, if he pleased, decide, by a new revelation, the disputes which exist between the different Protestant societies? Could he not establish a tribunal to decide every question in which faith was interested? Did not this prerogative reside in the Apostles? They exercised it, and from them the Catholic Church alone inherits it by uninterrupted succession. Let the *Protestant of Salem* refute, if he can, the proofs of this fundamental article, which you have produced against the Rev. Mr. Lesslie.

This essential right of man, this right to examine and judge for himself in matters of faith and eternal salvation, and many other such phrases, have a seducing effect in a country, in which the invaluable blessings of civil liberty are so deservedly admired. But, did the Apostles violate the essential rights of the first Christians, by deciding the question concerning the observance of the Mosaic rites by the Gentile converts? Did God violate the rights of natural reason in deciding by revelation many questions about the laws of nature? Let me ask the *Protestant*, whether a citizen of Salem suffers any violation in his essential rights, when in a question about property, he is bound to submit his private opinion concerning the meaning of a civil law, to the decision of a court of justice? What would become of the state of Massachusetts, if the only bond of society were a code of laws, abandoned to the supposed *essential right* of every citizen to interpret them by his *private judgment*? It might then be soon parcelled into four score, and perhaps more, independent republics.

The principles hitherto laid down, so evidently refute the fundamental doctrine of Protestants, that it is useless to enter into a particular refutation of the sophisms of the *Protestant of Salem*. They are all founded either on misrepresentations or misconceptions. Perhaps he might sooner perceive the fallacy of his reasoning, were he to suppose himself disputing with a Deist, who might easily retort all his arguments against himself, by substituting the word *Bible* for Popish Church or Church of Rome, &c.

I remain, &c.

A PHILADELPHIAN.

Mar Carey?

[The

[The following Letter was sent to its address in manuscript. The only answer received was, " It is put into a file entitled " *Consideranda*."]

To the Rev. Dr. BELKNAP, *Writer of the History of New-Hampshire.*

SIR,

I have lately read your interesting History of New-Hampshire, and your discourse on the discovery of America. Though you afford much useful information, and shew liberality in many of your remarks, yet whenever you mention the Roman Catholic church, you totally disfigure her doctrines. What a pity that a man, so well qualified as you are to instruct your countrymen, should endeavour to rivet the unjust prejudices in which we New-Englanders have all been educated! As I flatter myself that you are open to conviction, I shall take the liberty to remark on a few passages of your books, and shall presume to hope, that, in a future edition, and in the other writings which you propose to publish, you will avoid the same errors.

I take no very particular notice of the terms, *Popish*, *Romish*, *Papist*, &c. which so frequently occur; though, as they always express contempt and are taken in a bad sense, a liberal Protestant ought to avoid them, and substitute in their place, *Catholic* or *Roman Catholic*, by which we designate those of our religion. We always call our dissenting brethren by the names which themselves adopt.

But a matter of more serious consequence, Sir, is your putting among the Catholic tenets, that "*to break faith with heretics is no sin*."* This assertion you attempt to prove by the conduct of the Missionary, Thury. But perhaps that gentleman had many reasons for dissuading the sachems from fulfilling their treaty with our forefathers; which we should see to be founded in justice, had we knowledge of all the circumstances of that affair. Granting, however, that he acted an unjust and wicked part, it by no means follows that, according to the Catholic religion, it is no sin to break faith with heretics. Catholic priests are often bad men, and may therefore act contrary to the principles which they profess.

You likewise relate the history of the Missionary, Sebastian Rallé,† in a manner that tends to confirm your readers in the same unjust prevention against the Catholic religion. Yet, according to your own account, the New-Englanders did not fulfil one very ex-

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* History of New-Hampshire, vol. I. p. 268.

† Vol. II. p. 46, &c.

press condition of their charter, viz. to attempt the conversion of the Indians; did not erect public truck-houses for their convenience, but suffered them to be cheated by private traders; were always encroaching on their hunting-grounds, &c.—while the French “taught them to pray to God;” sent them presents; abstained from seizing on their lands, &c. The good priest, Rallé, at the expense of every comfort and advantage in this life, administered consolation to those poor helpless savages, and undertook to see them righted: Therefore the Catholics hold that no faith ought to be kept with heretics! Instead of breach of faith, I see justice, humanity and heroic generosity in such behaviour.

It is so far from being a part of our belief, “*that it is no sin to break faith with heretics,*” that in all Catholic countries such a breach of faith is as severely punished, as if it were with Catholics. This imputation is as ancient as the *pretended* reformation of England; and was invented to furnish a plea for persecuting Catholics as enemies to the State, because it was found easier to blacken them than to refute their arguments. This charge has been constantly renewed by our adversaries, though they have been always challenged to produce their proofs. Not only the ancient, but all the modern, writers of our communion have positively declared this abominable position to be no article of their creed. The famous Father O’Leary has distinguished himself on this head, in his dispute with Mr. John Westly. The whole body of English and Irish Catholics have lately expressed their detestation of this falsely imputed tenet. The English, in their petition presented to the House of Commons, “reject, reprobate and abhor the doctrine, *that faith is not to be kept with heretics,* as contrary to religion, morality and common honesty. They hold and solemnly declare, that no breach of faith with, or injury to, or hostility against, any person whomsoever, can ever be justified under pretence that such person is a heretic or an infidel.” The Irish Catholics, in their declaration made by their general committee, say: “We hold it as an unchristian and impious principle, *that no faith is to be kept with heretics.* This doctrine we detest and reprobate, not only as contrary to our religion, but as destructive of morality, of society, and even of common honesty; and it is our firm belief, that an oath made to any person, not of the Catholic religion, is equally binding as if it were made to any Catholic whatsoever.” These pieces, Sir, have both appeared in our public papers.

If you still insist, that this point belongs to our belief, I beg you to have the goodness to show it me in our creeds or in our general councils, where we always expect to find the dogmas of our religion. For my part, I cannot discover this article in any of our creeds, from that which is called the Apostles’ down to that more particular one that was published by Pope Pius the 4th; nor can I trace

trace it in any decree of our general councils, from that which was held at Jerusalem, a few years after the ascension of our Lord, down to that which was assembled in the city of Trent.

I pass on to your other work. In the first place, it appears somewhat singular, that, in a discourse expressly commemorative of the advantages of the discovery of America, for which the world is wholly indebted to Catholics and in some degree to a Catholic priest,* you should take occasion to blacken the religion of the hero and heroine whom you undertake to panegyrize.

You say (p. 31.) that "*the ancient imperfect system of geography became a part of the creed of the Roman church, and was defended by the court of Inquisition.*" † This assertion seems rather hasty; for we do not read, that either Isabella, Perez, Columbus, or the physician Paul, were ever accused, or even suspected of heresy, though they did all they could to destroy that system. Now, considering the extreme jealousy our church has always shown in preserving the sacred depositum of the faith, those persons would certainly have been arraigned and punished, if that old system were then a part of the Catholic creed—In that case, Paul of Florence would never have been suffered to declare (as he does) that "*the voyage round the globe was honourable and glorious among all christians.*"

I do not recollect any thing in the history of our church which can afford any reasonable pretext for this accusation. Pray, Sir, when did the "*infallible chair*" decide upon geographical questions?

It would not be fair to repeat the history of Galileo or of Virgilius, since the church gave no judgment in either case. The alarm which those men occasioned in their time was *wholly* on account of the Redeemer's honour. Virgilius advanced, that "*there is another world and other men under the earth, or another sun and moon*" (quod alius mundus et alii homines sub terra sint, seu alius sol et luna.) Pope Zachary ordered Virgilius to come to Rome that his doctrine might be examined; but he pronounced no sentence. It was not the idea of the antipodes or of the spherical figure of the earth that startled the good pontiff, but the opinion that there was on earth another race of men, not descended from Adam, nor redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is nothing to our purpose, whether the Pope was misinformed or not—But supposing that a condemnation *really* took place, and that (if you please) in support of the old imperfect system of geography, or of the non rotundity of the earth; yet be assured, Sir, that Catholics themselves

* PEREZ—Discourse, p. 22.

† Upon inquiry, you will *perhaps* find that the establishment of the inquisition was posterior to or at most coeval with, the discovery of America.

themselves would not respect it, because they consider the Pope's decrees as binding, *only* when they concern some point of religion, and when they are received by the universal church.

I more readily make allowance for the mistakes you committed in the first volume of your History of New Hampshire, because it appeared in 1780; but that, after so many opportunities of better information, in the year 1792, you should denominate the Catholic religion "idolatry,"* and should doubt whether our Indian converts have not changed their original superstitions for others,† does not look very candid. You here insinuate that we are not even Christians: And that this is your idea I conclude from your saying, that, "the Moravians seem to have an art of attaching savage nations to their faith—beyond any *other denomination of Christians*;" which no man can pronounce with truth, who admits our title to Christianity, and who knows any thing of the wonders which our missionaries have performed, and still perform, among the Indian tribes. This exclusion of us from the Christian name appears a little contrary to the prevailing sentiments of this land, where for salvation you require *at most* a belief of what are called the fundamentals of religion. Now which of these fundamental points do we deny? Is it the doctrine of three divine persons in one God? Is it the doctrine of the incarnation, of the redemption, of original sin, of the general resurrection and judgment, of the absolute eternity of hell torments, of the necessity of grace for beginning and ending every good work, of the free agency of the human will, &c.? You know, or might know, Sir, that our church firmly believes and tenaciously maintains all these capital articles of divine revelation. And we have so frequently explained ourselves on the eucharist, the Saints and their images, that few, except the most ignorant among you, accuse us of idolatry on those heads.

This *superstition and idolatry*, which you impute to our Indian converts, is the very same which all Christian nations once professed. It was this which formed the greatest heroes of the kingdom from which we derive our origin—an Alfred the Great, a Sir Thom  Moore, &c. It was under its influence that princes, princesses, and other personages learned to practise the virtues of the gospel, such as humility, alms-deeds, contempt of the world, &c.—that the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and many others, were founded. I could run through all the different ages, from the Apostles down to the present day, and show that no one people ever received the gospel but from preachers commissioned by Popes: I could defy you to point out a single heathen nation that ever received its Christianity from any society separated from ours: which

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* Discourse. p. 51, 52.

† P. 54.

alone inspires its ministers with a pure and generous zeal for extending the reign of Jesus Christ.

It would be worth your while to inquire why the sects do not make the same exertion in the cause of their Redeemer, and why his blessings has not hitherto crowned the feeble efforts which they have made.*

Our *idolatrous, superstitious* Indians according to the testimony of the most competent judges, Protestant as well as Catholic, show forth the Christian virtues in a much greater degree than could be expected from people of their way of life: They even put to shame civilized Christians of all denominations. They have a spirit of humility, of prayer, of self-denial, of chastity, of charity, &c.†

Could you reasonably expect to make them better, were you yourselves to be their teachers? But this is not likely to be the case. For, as you very wisely remark, "you had better first agree among yourselves, what the truths of the gospel are,"‡ before you begin to preach among the savages. If we are allowed to form a conjecture concerning the present dissenters from our church by those of ancient times, and by yourselves hitherto, this agreement will not speedily take place.§ It seems to me, there is an increasing

* The reason of this unfruitfulness you will, perhaps, find in their being *sects*, "Ab arbore frange ramum, fractus germinare non poterit. A fonte præcide rivum, præcisus arescet."—*St. Cypr. De Unitate Ecclesie*.

† This charity they shew by praying most cordially for the conversion of their *erring brethren*. This is the tender name they give to all Protestants, as I am informed by a dissenting minister, who resided near them for many years. He expressed to me how much this surprised him, because he expected that they had imbibed from their instructors a spirit of hatred and persecution against those who are out of our church.

‡ P. 62.

§ A famous artist once made a painting in which all the different nations of the earth were represented, in the peculiar dress of their country. Instead of clothing the Frenchman, he drew him in a shirt with a bundle of cloth under his arm. Being asked his reason for this singularity, he replied:—"The French dress themselves in so many different ways, and change their fashions so often, that, whatever dress I should have put on him, in a very short time he could not be known. Having the stuff, he may cut it to his liking."

It being impossible, likewise, to represent exactly the doctrine of the Protestants, on account of its constant variation, we leave them their Bible, that every one may form from it whatever profession of faith he pleases.

ing division of sentiment among you. Your present appearance of union *entirely* consists in an indifference about all points of faith, in a toleration of one another for mutual ease and peace, and in a fixed haired and contempt for the Roman Catholic church, which *alone* has Jesus Christ for founder.

Be pleased, Sir, to excuse the few observations on your writings, which I have made according to the duty of my office, in virtue of which I am instituted a defender of the Catholic doctrines. I think that throughout the whole, I have treated you with Christian moderation and politeness. At least, I have not intentionally failed in either.

I have the honour, Rev. Sir, to subscribe myself your very humble servant,

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

Boston, July 26, 1793.

To the Rev. Dr. LATHROP.

SIR,

WHILE the collection of my pieces is now in the press, your Discourse falls into my hands. As many persons, my friends at least, will expect my remarks, I shall endeavour to gratify them, as far as the shortness of the time will permit. Your pamphlet is called, *A Lecture on the Errors of Popery*. A more proper title would have been, *The Errors of Dr. Lathrop*, or of the Protestant authors whom he has servilely copied.

As you took for text, "*Being Lord's over God's heritage*," (1 Pet. v. 3) you ought, if you intended to avoid confusion of ideas, to have shown what is meant by holding it over God's heritage: which would naturally have led you to say, that every exercise of power is not lording it, but that this expression imports an usurpation of authority which has not been lawfully conferred. You ought next to have shown, that the Roman Catholic church thus lords it. And here you should have produced those "*arguments from Scripture and reason, which* (you say, p. 30) *are the only weapons of your warfare*," in order to overturn the claim of our church, to regulate the faith of Christians. You know she pretends to prove, and from the Bible too, that she has a divine commission for this purpose. Perhaps you might have been more successful than your brother Lesslie in disproving this our funda-

mental tenet. Until this is overturned, all attempts to show the usurpations of our church are extremely ridiculous. But having destroyed this our strong hold, you might then, with propriety, have pleaded for the Scripture as the only rule of faith, and have established the independency of conscience. But if our arguments for the church's infallibility are solid, the plain consequence is, that every Christian is bound to submit his conscience to her decisions, and to receive her interpretations of the Scripture. These few observations preclude the necessity of many remarks, which naturally offered themselves while I peruse your Discourse.

All your professions of esteem for the learning and piety of several members of our communion (p. 7, 28) seem only intended to give greater weight to the many groundless charges which you afterwards bring against us. At every page *almost* we meet with misconceptions and misrepresentations. On no one point have you given our real doctrine, except with respect to transubstantiation. To the Pope's supremacy you have added infallibility, (p. 16, 22) which we attribute *only* to the church. To the Saints you make us give the power which belongs to Jesus Christ: (p. 14, 15) whereas we *only* implore the aid of their prayers with our common Mediator, in the same manner as we beg those of our fellow Christians on earth. To indulgencies you make us ascribe "*the forgiveness of all sins past, present, and to come—salvation from hell—redemption from the pains of the infernal regions:*" (p. 21, 22) whereas, in our real creed, an indulgence is nothing but the releasing of the pains due to *sin already forgiven*. These, and many other, unfair representations of the Catholic belief, you might have spared yourself the trouble of writing, and the disgrace of publishing, if you had only spent a day or two in reading over our catechism. For the refutation of the absurdities and lies of Dr. Middleton and others, whom you quote, I refer you to the preface of Bishop Challoner's CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN.

The church you say has been guilty of usurpations over the fortunes of men. She it is true, condemned Wicliff for asserting the possession of temporalities to be contrary to the institution of Christ. For, however dangerous riches may be to those who possess or administer them, the holding of them can be no crime. Our Saviour and his disciples had a common purse, of which Judas was the keeper: The first Christians sold their possessions, and laid the price of them at the feet of the Apostles. It cannot be sinful to copy these models. I imagine that most of you consider Wicliff as erroneous on this head; else so many of your churches would not possess estates. The desire of riches, I presume is not peculiar to clergymen of our communion. Generally speaking, gentlemen of your cloth have an eye to this particular in the choice of their wives. They are commonly pretty assiduous in their court

to the rich ; and very frequently, by their attentions, obtain good legacies : And I have never heard of one who was so scrupulous or generous, as to refuse them in favour of the poor relations. There is no vanity in saying that our clergymen have always exhibited as many examples of disinterestedness as those of any other society. Ever since the Apostles, the pastors of the Catholic church have always been the fathers of the poor, and, of course, the natural depositories of the alms which were destined for their use. Instead of dissipating these alms for themselves or relations, they regarded it as a sacred duty to augment, by economy and industry, a fund which was destined for religious and charitable purposes. A great number of religious communities have increased their possessions by laboriously cultivating lands, which, when first bestowed upon them, were of very little value. The maintenance of the miserable, in former times, without any poor tax, the deliverance of entire provinces from the distresses of famine, the erection of vast numbers of noble hospitals, seminaries of learning, and temples, the establishment of missions throughout almost the whole world, are so many witnesses that the riches of the church have been *habitually* employed according to their destination. The instances of the contrary are the crimes of individuals, and not of the church, which has always condemned them. The Church; far from encouraging avarice in the clergy, has, in several councils, forbidden the acceptance of donations to the prejudice of poor relations.

You make a lamentable outcry against the cruelty and persecution of our church. (p. 28) If some of her members have been persecutors, you must attribute it to human nature, and not to their religion. Men of all religions have persecuted in their turn, either to keep or to get possession. Were I, by way of recrimination, to call your attention to the conduct of Luther, Calvin, and their followers on the continent of Europe, and to the state of Catholics under a Protestant government in England, Ireland and Scotland, and even in North-America, from its first settlement, until our happy revolution,—it would appear that the reformers, considering they are not yet of 300 years standing, have made a laudable progress in the science of persecution. But I scorn to lay open old wounds, when no other end can be effected by it than to widen the breach which charity should incline every christian to endeavour to close. Had this charity been your guide, Sir, we should not have seen you undertake, in these days of liberal sentiment, to rake together a few scattered transactions, performed in different ages by *individual* Catholics, and charge them to the *whole church*, of which they were members:---We should not have read in the very beginning of your Discourse, of the "*idolatry, tyranny, usurpations, damnable heresies, fatal errors, abominable superstitions, and other crying wickednesses of the Romish church ;*
that

that she is that mystical Babylon, that man of sin, that apostate church spoken of in the New Testament.*"—You would have disdained to repeat this language which was dictated in the days of religious rancour.—Instead of accepting the office, to which you were invited by the University, of blackening your fellow Christians, you would have solicited your brethren to join their efforts to yours to abolish altogether a foundation, whose object is to nourish animosity among American citizens. The Pope no longer appears at the head of your Primer, to affright your children; his effigy is no longer burnt on the fifth of November; no longer likewise should he be held up as a bugbear to terrify our collegians.

All the facts which you have heaped up require a long explanation, and when explained, are nothing to what ought always to be the main question among candid Protestants, viz. Has the Catholic church ever taught, or does she now teach, any errors dangerous to salvation? All the rest is nothing to the purpose. We, as well as you, condemn the Popes who have usurped authority over kings. There always were a great number of Catholics who reprobated this conduct, without being excluded from our communion; which proves that the right of Popes over sovereigns was never an article of our faith. It is ever the conduct of individuals which you impute to the church. It is proper, however, to observe, that all those princes, whom the Popes have attempted to depose, were tyrannical oppressors of their subjects, and that the church alone at that time had power and credit enough to resist their vexations. This may, perhaps, entitle them to our gratitude, as the protectors of the people, and the friends of humanity.

Considering how often, from Luther to the present day, the prophecy of the Pope's speedy downfall has been repeated and turned out false, in your place, Sir, I would not have hazarded it again. (p. 30) The present commotions in Europe, on which you ground your prediction, so far from foreboding the destruction of our church, will, on the contrary, if we may judge from what has already happened, extend her empire to countries where she was scarcely known before.

The confession you make, (p. 7) that "*Protestant churches still retain errors which many in their communion wish to see reformed,*" would afford me a fine field to prove, that they cannot be the church of Jesus Christ, which is ever the *pillar and ground of the truth* (1 Tim. iii. 1)—and to point out the horrible dangers to which the simple believers are exposed, surrounded as they are with so many errors. But this would lead too far.

I conclude.

* These are the words of Mr. Dudley, the founder of the lecture. They contain a bull; the Church (*she*) being called the *man* of sin.

I conclude by offering myself again as a "*champion to defend the doctrines of the church of Rome,*" confident that I should not "*retire without notice,*" (p. 31) if you, or any other of your brethren were so abundantly provided, as you pretend, with *arguments from Scripture and reason* to refute me. But perhaps you are so sparing of them at present, that you may reserve them against those who may escape from the ruins of Popery into this land, and "*attempt to seduce your children.*"

I am, Rev. Sir, your very humble servant,

JOHN THAYER, Catholic Missionary.

Boston, Sept. 27, 1793.

P. S. A Protestant, to whom I read the above, put me in mind, that I ought to have said something of St. Peter's having been in Rome, which you insinuate to be doubtful. To this I say, that there is no one historical fact better proved. The ancient Fathers who have attested it, are, St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, St. Denys, Bishop of Corinth, Caius and Origen, quoted by Eusebius, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, St. Athanasius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Sulpitius Severus, St. Austin, St. John Chrysostom, Orosius, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Optatus, Theodoret, and many others.— St. Peter's being at Rome was never called in question by any man, Infidel or Christian, Catholic or Heretic, for thirteen or fourteen hundred years after Christ. Grotius, a learned Protestant, writes, that "*no Christian ever doubted but St. Peter was at Rome.*" Chamierus, another learned Protestant, tells us, that "*all the Fathers, with great accord, have asserted that Peter went to Rome, and governed that church;*" and Dr. Pearson the Protestant Bishop of Chester, one of the most eminent men that the reformation has produced, has demonstrated that St. Peter was at Rome, and that the Bishops of Rome are his successors. A little more acquaintance, therefore, with ecclesiastical history, or even with your own authors, would have induced you to suppress the insinuation, that St. Peter was never at Rome.

In the Boston ed. of 1793

W. a. p. s. by Mr. Thayer

FINIS.

 IN THE PRESS,

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